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February 2014  
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# GoodFood

MIDDLE EAST

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*love*  
**food**

Valentine's Day cooking, gift guide & date night ideas

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CHICKEN SOUP FOR THE TUMMY



GARDEN PARTY MENU

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**Crate&Barrel**  
Mall of the Emirates | Mirdif City Centre

EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Sudeshna Ghosh  
sudeshna.ghosh@cpimediagroup.com  
ASSISTANT EDITOR: Nicola Monteath  
nicola.monteath@cpimediagroup.com  
SENIOR DESIGNER: Odilaine Salalac-Mejorada  
PHOTOGRAPHER: Anas Cherur

ADVERTISING

SALES DIRECTOR: Lauren Wing  
lauren.wing@cpimediagroup.com /+971 52 699 1723  
SALES MANAGER: Luke Britton  
luke.britton@cpimediagroup.com /+971 50 873 0284

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Marizel Salvador  
marizel.salvador@cpimediagroup.com

ONLINE

Louie Alma

PRODUCTION

Devaprakash

DISTRIBUTION

Rochelle Almeida  
rochelle.almeida@cpimediagroup.com

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES, LOG ON TO:  
www.cpievents.net/mag/magazine.php

GROUP CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER Dominic De Sousa  
GROUP CEO Nadeem Hood  
GROUP COO Gina O'Hara

GROUP DIRECTOR OF EDITORIAL Paul Godfrey  
GROUP DIRECTOR OF SALES Carol Owen

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Head Office, PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE  
Tel: +971 4 440 9100  
Fax: +971 4 447 2409  
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DIRECTOR OF PUBLISHING: Nicholas Brett  
HEAD OF PUBLISHING: Chris Kerwin  
HEAD OF EDITORIAL: Jenny Potter  
PUBLISHING COORDINATOR: Eva Abramik

**Immediate Media Co.**

CHAIRMAN: Stephen Alexander  
DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Peter Phippen  
CEO: Tom Bureau  
HEAD OF LICENSING AND SYNDICATION:  
Joanna Marshall  
INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS MANAGER:  
Aleksandra Nowacka

**UK Good Food Team**

EDITOR: Gillian Carter  
CREATIVE DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP:  
Elizabeth Galbraith  
FOOD DIRECTOR FOOD GROUP: Lulu Grimes  
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR: Alfie Lewis

# Welcome!



I know this is supposed to be a quieter time of the year, with Christmas and New Year well and truly behind us, but over here at *BBC Good Food ME* towers, it feels like the festive season is only just beginning! Hot on the heels of our recently concluded awards ceremony (which was a resounding success!), we've got the Dubai Food Festival commencing this month, starting with the inaugural Dubai Food Carnival on February 21, as well as Gourmet Abu Dhabi bringing a host of celebrity chefs to the capital this month.

A sign of the exciting times we are living in, when it comes to food in the region, the Dubai Food Festival is a government initiative that aims to bring together the diverse food festivals that the city will be playing host to in the next few weeks. We've been talking about it for a while now, but I think this is a really important step towards establishing Dubai as a global gastronomy hub – not just for its ever-growing list of high-end restaurants, but increasingly for its focus on markets and producers, local cuisine, and innovative foodie concepts. We will be there at Dubai Festival City for the carnival, so do pop by and say hello!

Speaking of celebrations, this is, of course, the month when everything around us seems to turn heart-shaped (and red or pink!) in the name of Valentine's Day. Since it is perfectly timed to fall on a Friday this year, don't miss this opportunity to make it a weekend celebrating love – we've got all the ingredients you need to do that in this issue, from a gourmet Valentine dinner-for-two menu (*Cook with love*, p46) to unique ways to spend the evening (*Make date night special*, p24) and a gift guide that will melt anyone's heart (*A little something for your Valentine*, p23).

The issue is packed with plenty of inspiration to continue the celebrations through the month – whether it's a *Weekend lunch in the garden* (p52) with friends and family to celebrate the shining sun and alfresco-perfect temperatures, or beautiful bakes that are an excuse to throw a party in themselves (*Keep them sweet*, p56)! We also get to know the man behind the brand, Sanjeev Kapoor, in an exclusive interview (*"Authenticity kills creativity!"*, p68), and share an expert guide to all things cheese in *Fromage facts* (p64) so you will have plenty to get stuck into this month.

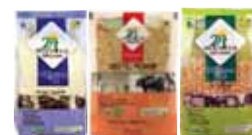
Here's to a fun-filled February!

*Sudeshna*

## Editor's picks



▲ I have a soft spot for scented candles, and this good-enough-to-eat sugared almond candle is just divine! p23



▲ The man behind the 24 Mantra organic brand is a farmer at heart, passionate about organic farming, and that reassures me about the product! p45

◆ I'm saving up for this platter to serve cheese on at my next dinner party, p64





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**85** Dinner vouchers for Tortuga, The Mexican Kitchen.

**86** Dining vouchers for UAE restaurants, plus event tickets.

**WIN!**

## Our recipe descriptions

**V** Suitable for vegetarians

**❄** You can freeze it

**❄** Not suitable for freezing

**Easy** Simple recipes even beginners can make

**A little effort** These require a bit more skill and confidence – such as making pastry

**More of a challenge** Recipes aimed at experienced cooks

**Low fat** 12g or less per portion

**Low cal** 500 calories or less per main.

**Superhealthy** Low in saturated fat, 5g or less per portion; low in salt, 1.5g or less; and at least one of the following: provides one-third or more of your daily requirement of fibre, iron, calcium, folic acid and/or vitamin C, or counts at least one portion of your recommended 5-a-day fruit and veg.

**Good for you** Low in saturated fat, low in salt.

**Heart healthy** Low in saturated fat, with 5g or less, and low in salt, with 1.5g or less, and high in omega-3 fatty acids

**1 of 5-a-day** The number of portions of fruit and/or veg contained in a serving

**Vit C Iron Omega-3 Calcium Folate Fibre**

Indicating recipes that are good sources of useful nutrients

**GLUTEN FREE** Indicates a recipe is free from gluten

Some recipes contain pork & alcohol. These are clearly marked and are for non-Muslims only. Look for these symbols:

**P** Contains pork

**A** Contains alcohol

## Store Directory

Contact numbers for outlets featured in this issue

**Ace:** 04-3411906

**Bits and Pieces:** 02-4444120

**Bloomingdale's-Dubai:** 04-3505333

**2XL Furniture:** 04-2888071

**Candelite:** 04-2840175

**Crate and Barrel:** 04-3990125

**Daiso:** 04-3882902

**Homes R Us:** 04-4469820

**Lafayette Gourmet:** 04-3399933

**Lakeland:** 04-3236081

**Organic Foods and Café:** 04-3382911

**The One:** 04-3456687

**Tavola:** 04-3402933

**TWG Tea Salon and Boutique:**  
04-3253857

Note: Prices in Qatari Riyals are approximately the same as UAE Dirhams.

# Your say

We love to hear from you!

## FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING

During the festive season, while my wife was busy preparing a main course for a Christmas pot-luck party at a friend's place, I decided to make a surprise dessert too! I thought of making one from a store-bought dessert packet, but while I was at the supermarket, I came across *BBC Good Food Middle East* magazine. While reading the magazine, I spotted the tempting Apple and cranberry crumble (*A taste of Nostalgia*, December 2013) which seemed easy enough to try out. It was a big hit and everyone was very impressed with my baking skills and wanted to know the secret to my delicious dessert. This was my first time cooking a recipe I found in a magazine and it's all thanks to *BBC Good Food ME*.  
*Gurpreet Singh*



## HEALTHY AND WISE

I've been very lethargic lately and know that it's a result of the junk food I've been bingeing on. Before stepping into the New Year, I made healthy eating resolutions and realised if I don't stick to them, I'll never feel better! When I picked up the January issue of *BBC Good Food ME* I knew I'd find tons of healthy recipes, but I didn't expect to also find a smart, handy guide of healthy ways to help me out (*33 ways to a healthier you*, January 2014), as well as weight loss tips (*15 golden rules for losing weight*, January 2014). Thank you for making my journey to healthier eating easier.  
*Kristy Bates*

## TALK TO US!

Email us on [feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com](mailto:feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com) with your thoughts, views and comments.

You can also connect with us on social media! Find us on:



@bbcgoodfoodmiddleeast



@bbcgoodfoodme

Or, you could write to us at:

**The Editor**

BBC Good Food Middle East.  
Grosvenor Business Tower, Tecom, Office 804  
PO Box 13700, Dubai, UAE.



The writer of the Star Letter wins a **Dhs1,000 shopping voucher from Crate and Barrel**. The 50-year old American brand is known for its exquisite selection of homeware products, essential kitchen items, outdoor and indoor furniture and everything else you can ever want for your décor. The collections are suitable for modern and traditional homes alike and are updated every season. There's really no better destination when it comes to cosy, chic and stylish furniture and home accessories. Crate and Barrel stores are located in Mall of the Emirates and Mirdiff City Centre, Dubai.



**Crate&Barrel**

## Star Letter

### BEGINNER'S LUCK!

Thank you *BBC Good Food ME* for helping me – an armchair critic and novice cook – prepare a wonderful birthday dinner for my health conscious wife. She has been trying to get me interested in cooking as she believes I will find it very therapeutic. I finally took the plunge last Friday on the occasion of her birthday and made her a surprise three-course dinner. I ventured into the kitchen armed with nothing but the January issue and loads of optimism. I started off with Chicken satay (*An Asian Spread*) which is her all-time favourite starter. For mains,

I tried the simple and easy to make Japanese style beef bowl (*Make it Tonight*), and for dessert, the tangy Lemon Drizzle cake (*Make it Lighter*). All the recipes were light on the tummy, descriptive and easy to follow even for a novice like me. Dinner was a super hit – all thanks to your magazine, of course! You've inspired me to do this more often now. And yes, cooking is therapeutic!

*Thomas Jacob*



### MIX AND MATCH RECIPES

I enjoy the magazine for the variety of recipes, as they sound appetising, satisfying and healthy. My only dilemma is that they all require a long list of ingredients. Could you please look into doing a feature which includes a selection of the same ingredients which can be used to cook at least five meals? Thank you!

*Stewart Laing*

### HOT STUFF

First of all let me say that I love *BBC Good Food ME*. I have been living in Dubai since 2009 and being Italian, I love cooking. I'm always on the hunt for the best and latest ingredients in the market, which is why I have always loved reading the magazine – to find out what's hot and happening in the culinary world.

*Arianna Braghieri*



From our social media pages

- \* Just read through the Eat Well recipe feature in *BBC Good Food ME* – it's sensational! – *LeGourmetGirls*
- \* The ingredients for the Gazpacho (cold tomato and cucumber soup) – recipe from *BBC Good Food ME* – are all ready. – *Gaganjeet S. Sethi*
- \* Are you looking for gorgeous gourmet buys for your home or kitchen? Why not take a tip or two from the *BBC Good Food ME's Aisle File* section – *Aveem Foods*



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# Foodie file

What's hot and happening in the culinary world, here and around the globe.



Koi Restaurant and lounge

## DINE IN THE CITY

- \* Popular local chef Marta Yanci of Marta's Kitchen has finally opened a restaurant, so you can try her delicious, refreshing creations whenever you want! The lovely little terrace café – open only for lunch on weekdays – is located in Jumeirah Lakes Towers, and offers three choices under appetisers, mains and desserts on a daily changing blackboard menu, at affordable prices. Call 0503798002.
- \* Koi Restaurant and lounge is the newest kid on The Collection at The St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort block, an emerging culinary hotspot. The sushi bar, cocktail lounge and restaurant offers diners a contemporary take on Japanese cuisine, such as kobe fillet mignon with juicy mushrooms, and steamed Chilean sea bass. Call 02-6783334.
- \* Saponi di Bice, the recently opened all-day restaurant at Jumeirah Citywalk promotes fresh, seasonal food in their menu which includes chicken and meat served at the rotisserie counter, healthy salads, pasta, and traditional pizzas made in wood-fired ovens. A selection of organic dishes, gluten free pasta, breads and a kids menu is also available. Call 04-3442550.
- \* Bentley Bistro and Bar at The Galleria at Al Maryah island, is the new go-to restaurant for French-inspired takes on comfort food. Head there to try classics such as omelette with comte, chicken sausage and duck confit hot dog or rib meat burger, and fruit fritters with chocolate fondue. Call 02-6262131.

**Winner**  
takes it all!

**Fancy yourself as a chef? The chance to prove yourself to the world could be just round the corner as Crate & Barrel brings an innovative amateur chef cook-off to Taste of Dubai next month. Details on the competition and how to enter will be revealed soon, watch this space (and follow us on facebook) for details.**

## Doorstep delivery

Voss, the premium water brand, has just launched Voss Direct, a home and office delivery facility, which allows you to enjoy the artesian water at your convenience. The glass and PET bottles are a firm favourite with celebrities such as the Olsen twins, as they are low in sodium and super stylish to tote around – they have been designed by former Calvin Klein creative director Neil Kraft after all! Get your aqua fix at [vosswater.ae](http://vosswater.ae).



## Where the streets have great grub...

Anthony Bourdain, the famed television personality, chef, and cookbook author, is about to reinvent Manhattan's foodie scene with the launch of a large-scale food market. The chef, who is best known for trying all sorts of street food around the world in his TV shows, will be collaborating with Stephen Werther, a New York entrepreneur, to bring Singaporean-style street food and hawker fare to the city of New York. We can't wait to sample Bourdain's latest offering!



## CULINARY CHARITY

Here's some feel-good news from a Dubai-based foodie! Daniel During, Managing Director of F&B consulting company Thomas Klein International and his nephew Emanuel Duerling – a chef who has previously worked at Noma – have set off on a four week adventure across South America to raise US\$50,000 (Dhs183,650) for Alzheimer's Disease International (a worldwide federation for the disease). The duo – who have a mother/grandmother who suffers from Alzheimer's – are on a 6,000km motorcycle journey from Buenos Aires to Cuzco in Peru, and will document Emmanuel's cooking sessions at local restaurants and trips to markets via a blog, [chefsontheroad.org](http://chefsontheroad.org). If you would like to donate towards the cause, visit [firstgiving.com/fundraiser/chefsontheroad](http://firstgiving.com/fundraiser/chefsontheroad).

Gelato  
gluttony!

The Gelato World Tour, focusing on all things gelato, is coming to Dubai. To be held at Burj Park from February 13-15, the tour – which has previously been held in Italy, Spain and Australia – will host a selection of workshops on gelato-making, and a competition where 16 gelato experts from the Middle East will compete to create the world's best flavour! Gelato lovers can try a selection of low calorie-and fat artisan gelatos, made from seasonal, local and premium quality ingredients and get to vote for the best flavour too. Free entry for all, visit [thegelatoworldtour.com](http://thegelatoworldtour.com).



## This just in:

**We're loving this pretty Three-tier cake stand (available in white and gold as well), which is perfect for showcasing our baking prowess! Dhs1,046 at 2XL.**

US \$25,500

(Dhs93,360) is the amount Just Falafel, a home-grown fast food brand, have donated to the United National World Food Programme (WFP) to help fight hunger across the globe.

A MONTH-LONG  
CELEBRATION OF FOOD

Dubai Food Festival, a 23-day food celebration which will position Dubai as a culinary hub, is set to take the city by storm! The festival is an umbrella under which a month of foodie festivities are planned, starting with the inaugural Dubai Food Carnival – a two-day family fiesta taking place from February 21-22 at Dubai Festival City. Other events include the region's biggest food trade show Gulfood, Taste of Dubai, and barbecue-themed The Big Grill at the Emirates Golf Club, from February 27-28. We will be there at the Dubai Food Carnival, so make sure to stop by, to sample food from fine-dining and casual restaurants, take part in masterclasses and workshops, and meet with celebrity chefs such as John Torode. For more information, visit [dubaifood-carnival.com](http://dubaifood-carnival.com).

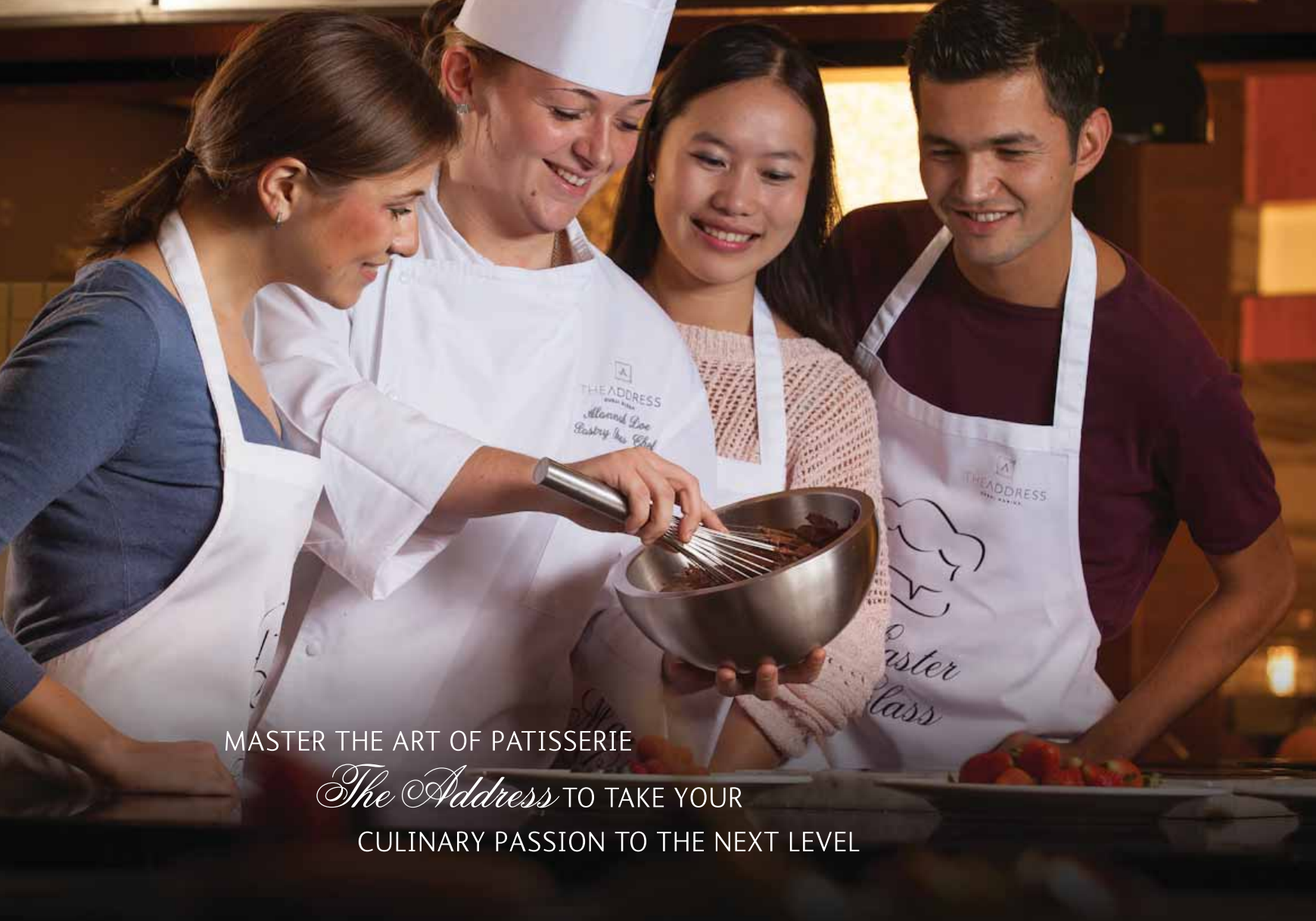
“As for butter versus margarine, I trust cows more than chemists.”

- Food policy expert, environmentalist and author, Joan Gussow

## # What's trending

## #vegan

**We're on a mission to include more vegan food in our diets this year, and have found that we aren't the only ones. A number of people have tweeted pictures of dishes including vegan chocolate and almond bars, and vegan sushi topped with agave chilli sauce, and filled with peppers, avocado and mushrooms. We also found that the French word for vegan cheese is 'fauxmage'.**



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# Aisle file

Gorgeous gourmet buys, kitchen gear, home décor and more.



How adorable is this Mr. and Mrs. Chin salt and pepper set by Alessi? It will add a colorful touch to any dinner table. Dhs185, at **BITS AND PIECES**.



If you're a tea lover, you may want to get this Tea Maker set which includes a gravity pot and two small tins of premium tea – tea time doesn't get any better than this! Dhs500, at **TAVALON TEA**.



A selection of bon bons placed on this elegant Zeus Leaf dish will add a dash of style to the coffee table. Dhs59, at **HOMES R US**.



Make strawberry-filled chocolates for your Valentine in these Chocolate mould heart shaped ribbon pattern paper liners. Dhs7 for a 24-piece set, at **DAISO**.



The robust Weber Go Anywhere portable charcoal barbecue is perfect for the season! Take your grill with you to the beach, park or a friend's place and cook up a storm, whether it's delicious kebabs, lamb chops or burgers. Dhs369, at **ACE**.



This My Kitchen Food Dehydrator comprises of five height-adjustable trays to let gentle heat from the base flow evenly to dehydrate and preserve the food – perfect for making your own dried fruit and vegetable snacks, candied peels and dried herbs! Dhs349, at **LAKELAND**.



Kids won't say no to fresh juices served in these adorable Babushka cups. Dhs91 for a set of three, at **2XL**.

There's nothing quite like Mauviel when it comes to sturdy, stylish cookware. Invest in one of these pans and your family will use it for years to come. From Dhs600 at **BLOOMINGDALE'S HOME**.



Add a vibrant, quirky touch to your dining area by using this Bon Voyage 12 drawer iron chest as a sideboard. Dhs4,500, at **TEJURI.COM**.





# THE MANY FLAVOURS OF LOVE



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Dubai

Celebrate a romantic evening with fine cuisine served within intimate settings at any one of our restaurants this Valentine's Day

**Channels** hosts a memorable experience with an international dinner buffet and standard selected beverages for **AED 620\*** per couple

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**Prego's** presents true Italian romance with an authentic 4-course set menu and a glass of bubbly for **AED 359\*** per person

**Nelson's** keeps the romance going with a delightful Victorian Valentine special 3-course set menu for **AED 180\*** per person

\*All prices are in AED & inclusive of 10% service charge and 10% municipality fees

P. O. Box: 503030, Dubai, UAE, T: +971 (0) 4 435 0201, F: +971 (0) 4 435 0011, [fb.media@rotana.com](mailto:fb.media@rotana.com)

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**NELSON'S**

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# Here to help

Our expert chef Andy Campbell offers practical advice to tackle all your cooking dilemmas.



**Q** I love puy lentils and have tried making it, but they never come out the way I like – soft, with a bit of crunch. Please advise on how to cook with it?

**A.** First of all, bring the lentils up to the boil and then reduce to a simmer. Do not add salt to the lentils when boiling, as it makes it go hard. I like to eat puy lentils with chopped onions, carrots, celery, garlic, a bay leaf, thyme and few parsley stalks, all simmered in olive oil. This makes the lentils a bit soft, but not mushy.

**Q** I find that when I freeze soup it doesn't taste as good as it does when fresh. Could you please give me a few recommendations on how to freeze it properly?

**A.** The trick to freezing soup is to cover the airtight container with a layer of wax paper, followed by a layer of cling film, before placing the lid on top. If freezing in a zip lock bag, remove all the air from inside. I always make sure I cool the soup in the refrigerator, before putting it in the freezer.

**Q** When I bake gooey flapjacks, it sticks to the pan. Please help?

**A.** Flapjacks are so delicious and can be healthy too! To keep them from sticking to the tray, try using a silicon baking mat or good quality wax paper to line the tray. Also, allow the flapjacks to cool sufficiently before cutting into squares or taking it out of the tray.

**Q** My Yorkshire pudding always goes wrong – they rise, then collapse and become heavy. Do you have any tips?

**A.** I know a number of people who have experienced this. First of all use equal quantities of eggs, milk and plain flour (eg. 1 cup each) and then season well with salt and pepper. Whisk the mix and then pass through a sieve. Allow the mix to stand in the fridge for at least an hour. Preheat the oven to 200C and place the moulds in the oven until it becomes really hot. Pour oil into the mould – the oil should be 1cm deep – and let it become a little smoky before adding the batter two-thirds of the way up the mould. Allow the pudding to thoroughly brown for about 10-12 minutes, before turning them over in the mould to let the bottom crisp up – beware of the hot oil. Cook for a further 3-5 minutes

to crisp up and hold their shape. Set aside to cool a little before serving.



## Andy's ingredient of the month



Since this month is about all things Valentine's, I will be using a lot of cocoa butter in desserts. The ingredient is a great source of vitamins,

flavonoids, antioxidants and minerals, and can be used to make chocolate desserts such as a flourless chocolate cake. Cocoa butter is available at Be Supernatural at Down to Earth Organic Food store and Organic Foods & Café.

## Menu planner

Whip up a delicious meal with recipes from this issue

### Dinner with the girls



An easy snack that is perfect for munching on while catching up on the goss – Mushroom & pepper melts, p32



Light and healthy, yet absolutely scrummy. Baked fish, p38



The perfect side with fish, Green beans with mustard, lemon and mint, p54



This Sticky treacle cake is guaranteed to induce requests for seconds! p57

# Tried & tasted

Each month, we review two of the UAE's top tables.

## Steakhouses



**Where:** Rhodes Twenty10, Le Royal Meridien Dubai

**What's it like:** It's all too easy for Dubai restaurants to over-kill on bling, but this one manages to strike that perfect balance between understated subtlety and glamour, with its sparkling crystal chandeliers, shiny chrome staircase leading to the upstairs bit, and the muted upholstery, with pops of purple brightening things up.

New additions to the menu seemed like the perfect excuse to check out this signature restaurant from much-lauded celebrity chef Gary Rhodes, although when it came to ordering, we ended up going for some of the well-loved classics – such as the potted chicken liver parfait with grape chutney with toasted brioche, raisin and fig bread. It came highly recommended, and we could see why – with its light, smooth texture, it's liver like it's never tasted before! The other starter my friend and I shared was a warm sesame glazed duck that brought an Asian-inspired hit to our tastebuds, washed down perfectly with the signature cocktail, Purple gangster, a berry concoction.

Mains were always going to be steaks, question was which one. Again, the staff came to our rescue, recommending a 350-day grain fed wagyu fillet from Australia, with a medium marbling score (the menu has a helpful guide to marbling) to my friend, while, in the interest of variety, I opted for a grain fed USDA prime sirloin. We tried each other's steaks of course, as well as shared sides of creamed spinach, a unique Welsh rarebit-topped Champs potatoes, and orange glazed carrots. The sides were just the right amount, and the steaks, melt-in-the-mouth beautiful – going to show that for the perfect steak dinner, all you need is good quality meat, and simple accompaniments. Job done!

With the restaurant's reputation for desserts, we couldn't resist the signature sticky toffee pudding, waving goodbye to our New Year diets as we tucked into the warm, sweet treat. Not content with sharing that, we also ordered the banoffee cheesecake with Baileys ice cream – decadent but worth every morsel.

**If you want to go:** Around Dhs800 for three-course dinner for two, without drinks. Call 04-3165550.

- Sudeshna Ghosh

**Best for:**  
A cosy  
catch-up

**ABU DHABI**

**Where:** The Capital Grill, Dusit Thani Abu Dhabi

**What's it like:** Sometimes simple is elegant, and that's exactly what this restaurant showcases, with its clean, modern lines, contemporary fabric light fixtures, and parquet flooring. Floral paintings add a touch of femininity to the otherwise meat-loving masculine space, while an open kitchen offers a behind-the-scenes look.

The sophisticated eatery offers premium Australian and American cuts. While my partner and I decided to share an appetiser – a platter of calamari, wrapped prawn and marinated tuna slices – we were presented with a round loaf of four different breads (we loved the soft, warm tomato bread) and a juicy, slow-roasted mini lamb on bone as amuse-bouche. We found the appetiser was, in fact, too small to share, and agreed the crisp batter-fried calamari on a pungent wasabi mayonnaise bed was the best of the trio, which didn't impress overall. For mains, my partner chose a Black Angus rib eye (250g) made medium well, with steamed vegetables and shoe string fries. The meat was moist inside and slightly lean and he loved the crunch the steamed broccoli and carrots had. We tried dunking the fries into the crackled pepper jus steak sauce and really enjoyed the soggy but flavourful results! Although the rib eye looked enticing, it didn't hold a candle to the Wagyu OP rib – a 550g piece I wish I could polish off in its entirety – which collapsed on the tongue instantly. The rich, soft and buttery meat had the right amount of char on top, and I soaked every piece in a thick port wine reduction sauce which seduced me with its sweet notes. Rassoile sweet potatoes, a fried sweet potato cake, was my chosen side and made for great crunchy, interval bites from the steak. After mains, we shared an incredibly light pavlova filled with strawberry cream, topped with Chantilly, sliced strawberries and crackle pop, before we decided to roll ourselves out.

**If you want to go:** Around Dhs700 for two, without drinks. Call 02-6988888.

- Nicola Monteath

**Best for:**  
Sophisticated  
date-night



Photographs supplied and by REVIEWS



# NO PAIN... NO PASTA!



Meet Zippy - our new ride

Round and round the narrow alleyways of Positano we went for a good three hours, not to mention hitting that pothole that sent us flying off our bike.



Ouch!!!  
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# Flavours of the month

Our pick of the best restaurant offers, promotions and deals this month.

## VALENTINE'S DAY OFFERS

### ★ Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire, InterContinental Dubai Festival City

A romantic meal awaits at this French restaurant from three-Michelin starred celebrity chef Pierre Gagnaire. Expect nothing short of excellence, as you tuck into a set menu featuring kobe beef preparations and a wild strawberries tart, complemented by a glass of rosé and paired wines. *Dhs2,380 per couple, call 04-7011127.*



Reflets par Pierre Gagnaire

### ★ The Beach House, Anantara Dubai The Palm Resort and Spa



There's nothing quite like the beachfront when it comes to romantic settings. You and your loved one can enjoy a delicious Mediterranean set menu of citrus scallop carpaccio, beef tenderloin, or oven roasted seabream with champagne shellfish veloute, as you take in the serene surroundings and relish every morsel while listening to the sound of waves lapping against the shore. *Dhs400 per person, call 04-5678304.*



### ★ Fire and Ice, Raffles Dubai

A five course set menu enjoyed alfresco in the Raffles botanical gardens, and a sommelier on hand to recommend bubbly and wine – it's luxe romance at its best! The gourmet offerings include pan seared scallops, black truffle mayo with quails egg, and butternut froth with Atlantic cod flakes and toasted pumpkin seeds for starters. Choose from oven baked halibut with braised baby fennel and razor clams, or grilled grass-fed tenderloin with root vegetable fondant for mains. The Dark Valrohna chocolate soufflé with crisp almond cookie, gianduja ice cream and caramel passion fruit sauce, makes for a sweet, seductive end to the meal. *Dhs695 per person, call 04-3248888.*

### ★ The Gramercy, DIFC

The Anti-Valentine's celebration at this bar and restaurant will ensure you and your friends have a fun night filled with games, live entertainment, special offers and a special 'twisted' menu. You can tuck into torn hearts (grilled artichoke hearts with avocado and grilled prawns on lettuce wraps), two faced (sea bass cooked two ways), or egg in your face (steak with chips and an egg), from many other such quirky options. *A la carte prices, call 04-437751.*

### ★ Le Royal Meridien Abu Dhabi

Take a bunch of friends along to the Anti-Valentine's Day Friday pool picnic at PJ O'Reilly's, Le Royal Meridien Abu Dhabi, to feast, play games and sip unlimited beverages, while dancing to tunes from the DJs and live bands. *Dhs199 per adult, call 800101101.*

### ★ Jumeirah at Etihad Towers

The Romance at the Tower's package is the ultimate way to pamper your loved one – if you're in the mood to splurge! It includes a six course dinner on Scott's Terrace, pick-up by hotel limousine, couple's spa treatments, one night stay in a Club suite, breakfast on the beach – served by a butler – and 'first-date' concept dinner at Quest, the Asian fine dining restaurant. The couple can also enjoy drinks and canapés at the Observation Deck at 300. *Dhs30,000 per couple, call 02-8115555.*

### ★ Ewaan, The Palace Downtown Dubai

Planning to take the family for a Valentine's dinner? The Oriental eatery is hosting a special buffet featuring ginger sautéed lobster and roasted duck. *From Dhs245 per person, call 04-8883444.*





### \* Waldorf Astoria Dubai Palm Jumeirah

This brand new hotel is the place to take your loved one to for a spectacular evening at a pool cabana. Savour duck foie gras terrine with passion fruit, caviar, red carabinieri with green asparagus and macerated strawberries, wild mushroom and black truffle risotti with ruccola pesto, scallop ravioli and fillet of veal with red beet reduction. Each couple gets a chocolate box and a surprise gift too!

From Dhs1,700 per couple, call 04-8162222.

### \* Habtoor Grand Beach Resort and Spa, Jumeirah Beach

Romance under the stars is the theme for the evening, and that's exactly what you and your partner can do while feasting on a five course menu by the pool, which features a seafood platter, wild mushrooms ragout, braised beef loin with fresh vegetables and natural beef jus, and an assortment of delectable mini pastries to share. Couples also get to enjoy a glass of champagne on arrival and box of chocolates, while all ladies get a rose and a heart-shaped cake as a souvenir too.

Dhs700 per couple, call 04-3995000.

### \* Giornotte, The Ritz-Carlton Abu Dhabi Grand Canal

The Venetian-themed restaurant will host a Friday brunch on Valentine's Day which will feature an extensive tapas and ceviche station, seafood and oyster bar, Wagyu beef leg carving station, sushi and sashimi, as well as a section dedicated solely to Arabic dishes. After dinner, the couple can visit the themed dessert room at Dolce, the Italian-style café.

From Dhs265 per person, call 02-8188282.



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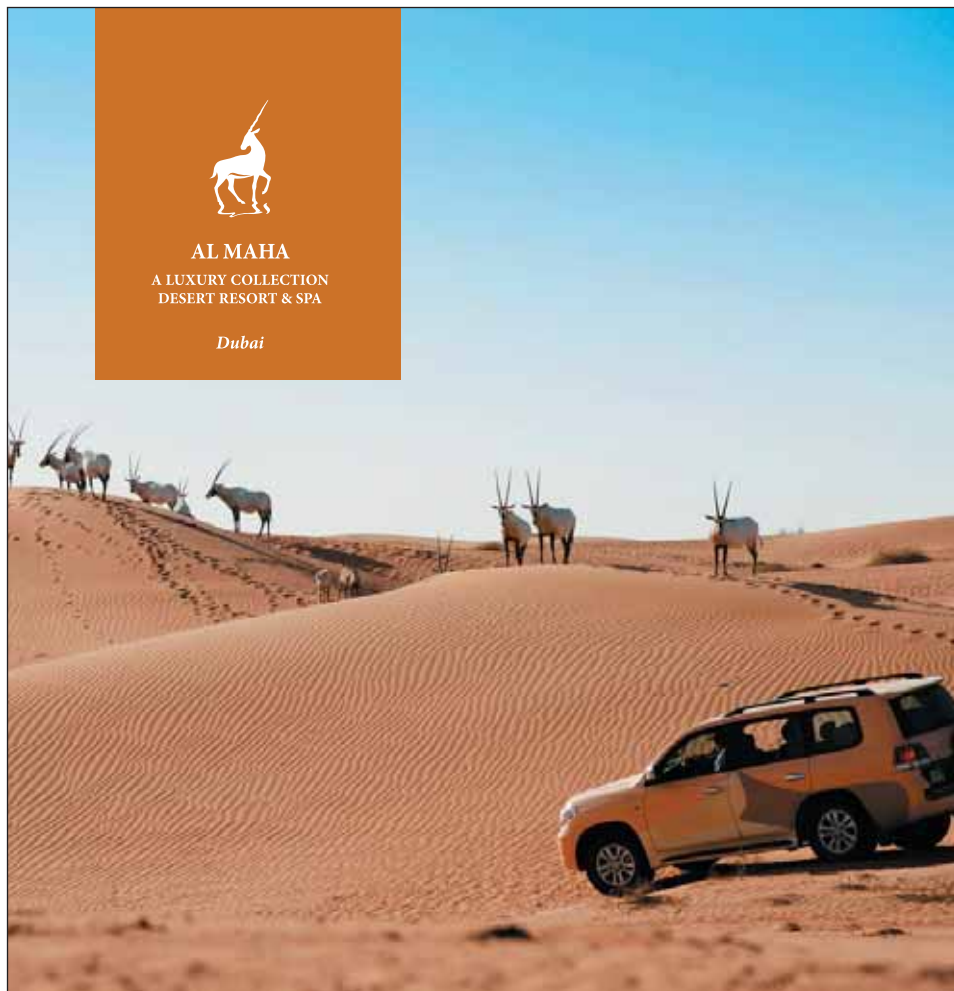
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# The Doha diaries

Our Doha-based columnist has his finger on the pulse of the city's foodie scene.

## A month for romance

Doha is not what one would describe as an overtly romantic city. With displays of public affection discouraged, it's uncommon even to see couples holding hands while taking an evening stroll. But calling it unromantic could not be further from the truth. Particularly as February 14 approaches, romance is certainly in the air. Florists are stocking up on crimson roses and Doha's many chocolate shops have put on display ornate packaging filled with wondrous delights. Although there isn't that commercial explosion of pink hearts and Cupid's arrows in stores, many people will mark Valentine's Day in some way, and the options are plenty, particularly those surrounding food. Quisine by Guy Savoy, for instance, is serving up a specially priced five-course gourmet dinner at their intimate dining room overlooking the marina at The Pearl Qatar.

For the ultimate romantic experience, hotels with seafront access are offering private dining on the beach. The Sharq Village & Spa's ever-popular beach gazebos are a prime choice and quickly book up. The Four Seasons Hotel also has a similar set-up with a four-course dinner either at a cabana or on the sand. The exclusive experience at both properties comes with a price tag to boot, ranging from QR3,000-QR5,000 per couple.

A sea view from high up is a different way to go. Strata at InterContinental Doha the City positions itself as the highest restaurant in the city and has a vantage point quite without equal. Also offering stunning views, but of a different kind, is French brasserie La Varenne. Perched on the 28<sup>th</sup> floor of Tornado Towers, it's a perfect spot to soak in the glistening city lights and enjoy a candlelit dinner. And don't worry if you forget to pick up flowers... every lady gets a rose! And because Valentine's Day falls on a weekend this year, there is also music and dancing aplenty for those inclined. The flamenco quartet at the Oryx Rotana's Cellar will regale couples sharing a meal of tapas and a pitcher. La Spiga at W Doha Hotel, meanwhile, will feature entertainment by Doha Jazz to accompany its Italian cuisine.

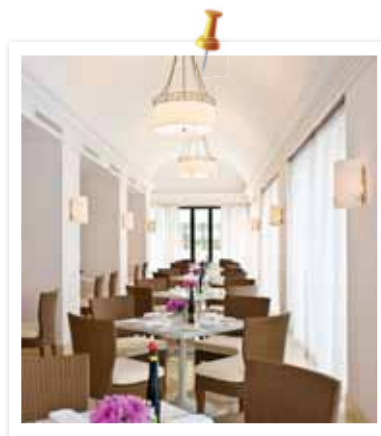
But, it's not just about expensive dinners in fancy restaurants. There are many spots along the water that are naturally intimate – the park surrounding the Museum of Islamic Art being a case in point. You could rent paddle boats, share cake and coffee at the MIA café, even have a picnic on a grassy knoll with view overlooking West Bay. To fully take advantage of the water, there is also the option of renting a dhow for the afternoon to island-hop and soak in panoramic views of an ever-changing skyline. Those seeking a less calorie-laden night or perhaps an evening with family and friends, can take a long amble through the likes of Souq Waqif and Katara Cultural Village, where there are art exhibits to take in and loads of opportunity to people-watch. On a day to celebrate love, Doha is wide open with possibilities.

The latest food news and happenings in the city.

## Love Italian!

Treat your loved one to an Italian-themed dinner at Rocca, Grand Hyatt Doha. The four-course set menu includes delicacies such as oyster gratin with lemon sabayon, ricotta and spinach cannelloni with pomodoro sauce, beef tenderloin or sea bass, and passionfruit panna cotta with meringue and banana sorbet.

QR295 per person, call +974 7021 8096.



## If music be the food of love...

What's a Valentine's Day date without good music? Celebrate the occasion at Jazz at Lincoln Centre, The St.Regis Doha, with a gourmet three-course set menu – inclusive of a cocktail or glass of bubbly – accompanied by contemporary jazz tunes from Jonathan Baptiste and his lively band.

QR395 per person, call +974 4446 0105.



## Have a healthy breakfast

Make your next breakfast meeting at Gourmet House, Kempinski Doha Residences and Suites, where the selection of nutritious dishes includes yoghurt with granola, nuts and fruits, power bars, whole grain cookies, and healthy breads.

From February 9 onwards, call +974 4405 3326.



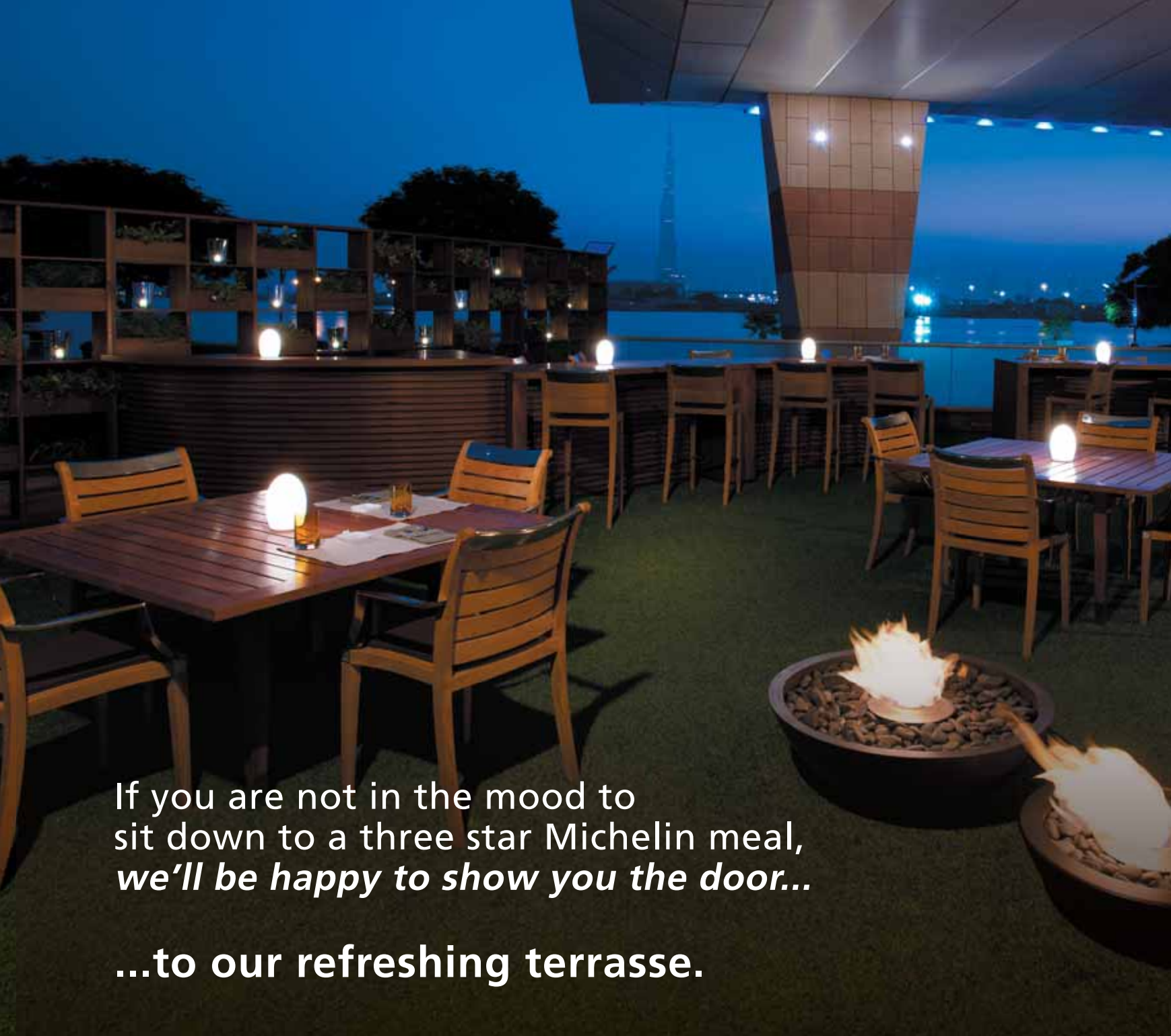
## Let the games begin

Watch the Six Nations Rugby at Champions Sports Bar and Restaurant, Renaissance Doha City Centre Hotel, and dig into a shepherd's pie and curry on a cup as part of their Pint and pie promotion.

QR70 per person, call +974 4419 6100.







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# On test: Waffle and Sandwich makers

Essential home gadgets reviewed.

## Moulinex Break time waffle, sandwich and grill

We'd always thought of waffle makers as something of an indulgence for domestic divas, but using this appliance was definitely an eye-opener. Compact and versatile, this is so much more than a waffle maker, packing in different grilling plates for different functions, within its bright, modern design.

**What we liked:** The appliance was easy to use, with not much other than common sense required to get started. Making waffles was a breeze – just pour in the dough and watch perfectly chequered waffles emerge that will put any Belgian to shame! The trick is to get the dough consistency right, and also to be careful of how much dough goes into the plates, so they don't overflow – that is a bit of a trial and error process. The different plates are easy to remove and clean, and we were pleasantly surprised with the grilling option – making this a three-in-one gadget, and eliminating the need for having a separate sandwich toaster or table grill even. Not that you wouldn't have space for other gadgets on the kitchen counter with this, particularly with its handy stand-up storage option.

### User tip

You can make sweet or savoury waffles, just adjust the dough accordingly and eat with your favourite toppings.

**What we didn't like:** While useful for different purposes, the model is pretty basic and lacking in features – extras like a timer would have been useful.

**To buy:** From Dhs199 at Carrefour and Sharaf DG stores.



## Severin sandwich maker SA 2962

Sandwich and waffle makers are definitely one of the unsung heroes of any kitchen. They're great for everything from late night toasties to delicious waffles for breakfast. This sleek silver and black model has heat resistant cool touch handles with a locking clip and three convertible non-stick coated plates – sandwich, grill and Brussels waffles plate.

**What we liked:** As soon as we got our hands on the appliance, we decided to go gourmet and experiment with a chicken curry with raisin and mango chutney panini. We found that the heat was distributed evenly across the plates and the panini was just the right type of crisp. We also made a few waffles – it can only make two at a time – and found that they come out perfectly, evenly cooked throughout, and the waffles were easy to take out. The machine also has an auto heat override function which makes it go off if it over-heats. The overall functionality and convenience of the sandwich maker found us making

a grilled sandwich every time we craved something quick and easy to make.

**What we didn't like:** The food seeped into the crevices of the grill plates which made it slightly hard to clean.

**To buy:** Dhs149 at Geant Hypermarket, Plug ins and E-max.



### User tip

Don't over-grease the plates as that will burn the food.

## Cuisinart Multifunction grill with sandwich and waffle maker

This sandwich and waffle maker sates all European food cravings, whether it is for a waffle or a croque monsieur! With a neat grey and black colour scheme, the machine comes with three grill plates, for waffles, croque monsieur and regular triangular-shaped toasted sandwiches, and has easy-to-read green and red indicator lights.

**What we liked:** The versatile and compact gadget can be neatly placed on any kitchen counter. It's sturdy, easy to use, and allows you to cook your favourite snack in less than 10 minutes – what's not to like? The first time we made waffles, it didn't turn out crisp – the way we like it – and was slightly on the soft side. It wasn't undercooked, but we realised that it should probably be cooked for a minute or two further, even after the green light comes on. The croque monsieur and grilled cheese toastie we made, tasted as good as the ones we've eaten at French cafés. Overall, the grill plates are easy to wash and the entire gadget can be wiped down once cool. When cooking, all you need to do is set the temperature to low, medium or high, place the sandwich or waffle batter on the grill plates and wait for the light to turn from red to green – it's as simple as

that! Even though it's a bit pricey, we think it's worth every dirham as you can get a lot of use out of it.

**What we didn't like:** Only two waffles or sandwiches can be made at once, so it isn't ideal for big families.

**To buy:** Dhs550, at Tavola.



### User tip

Pour just enough waffle batter to cover the grill plates, or the mixture will fall out on the sides when closed.

What products would you like to see reviewed in the magazine? ✉ Tell us on [feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com](mailto:feedback@bbcgoodfoodme.com) or [facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme](https://www.facebook.com/bbcgoodfoodme).



## Celebrate Love in Many Languages

Anticipate a delicious tryst with Dusit Thani Dubai's Valentine offerings. With an array of authentic flavours to choose from, your expression of love will surely find its way to say "Khan Rak Khun" in Benjarong, "Ti Amo" in PAX and "I Love You" in The Californian.

For table reservations, call +971 4 317 4515 or e-mail [dine.dtdu@dusit.com](mailto:dine.dtdu@dusit.com)

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La Maison du Chocolat  
heart-shaped box of  
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From Dhs161 for a small box,  
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**SHARE A BITE!**

Aveem milk chocolate  
caramel hearts box  
Dhs30 at Organic Foods  
and Café.



**RECIPE FOR LOVE**

Staub heart  
cocotte  
Dhs595 at Tavola.

# A little something for your Valentine!

Chocolates, candles, and pretty trinkets are just some of the ways to say 'I love you' this Valentine's Day.



**MAKE TIME FOR TEA**

Follow me tea Haute Couture tea tins  
Dhs140 at TWG Tea Salon and Boutique.



**SWEET SCENTISATION**

Sanderson  
sugared almond  
and iris large  
candle  
Dhs140  
at Tejuri.com.



**DRINK TO LOVE!**

Diamond patterned  
red glass

Dhs127 at Villeroy  
and Boch.

**PRETTY PRECIOUS**

Prestat Jewel box assortment of dark,  
milk and white chocolate

From Dhs53 for 4pcs box, Lafayette Gourmet.



**KEEP THE FLAME BURNING**

Love candle  
(small) Dhs199  
at The One.



**MAKE IT PERSONAL**

Personalised I heart  
you cookies

Dhs12 each, at Oushé  
Gourmet Bakeshop.



# Make Date night special!

Tired of the same old same old when it comes to Valentine's Day celebrations? Here are some unique ways to celebrate the day.



## ♥ The royal treatment

Everyone loves to be treated like royalty, so why not do it in style at Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi? You can book in for dinner on an outdoor terrace at one of three restaurants, Sayad, BBQ Al Qasr or Mezza Luna, plus enjoy a limousine pick-up, private butler service and a framed photo upon departure. Ladies receive a gorgeous flower bouquet as well.

*Minimum spend of Dhs3,000. Call 02-6907999.*

## ♥ Plan a themed-dinner party with friends



Date nights don't always have to be just the two of you! Invite your closest couple friends over for a themed dinner party. Log onto Reastronaut, an online dining experience platform, to create a themed table at the Dubai Moving Image Museum. You can invite from four-15 guests and indulge in a three-course Arabic-inspired set menu of fattoush, seafood and kibbeh, mixed grills, and an assortment of Lebanese desserts.

*From Dhs150 per person, visit [www.restronaut.me](http://www.restronaut.me). Food not included, visit [magnoliadubai.com](http://magnoliadubai.com).*

## ♥ Dance the night away

A four-course dinner awaits couples for the Dia del Amor (Day of Love) evening at Izel, Conrad Dubai. Celebrate the night with Latin flair and treat yourself to bubbly and strawberries before dinner. The menu for the night includes scallop tiradito with mango salsa and egg vinaigrette, and papaya barbecue Argentinian sirloin, while live entertainment is provided by the Colombian band and tango performers who will keep the evening buzzing. Diners can enjoy two-for-one drink offers on the night.

*Dhs600 per couple, call 04-4447111.*

## ♥ Sensory stimulations

Forget candlelight dinners, this Valentine's Day, enjoy your dinner date in complete darkness to truly focus on each other! At Noire, Spectrum on One, Fairmont Dubai, you will get to enjoy a gourmet three-course menu with paired beverages, in complete darkness. After a welcome reception (in a well-lit room!), night vision goggled-staff will guide you into the pitch black curtained off dining room, and then proceed to serve you each course, talking you through the dish. The fumbling in the dark can make for a few misadventures, while the discovery of each dish by

taste and texture alone can be lots of fun.

*Dhs325 per person, call 04-3325555.*

## ♥ Weekend getaway

Escape to the luxurious desert sanctuary, Qasr Al Sarab Desert Resort by Anantara, for a weekend stay with your loved one at a Deluxe room, suite or villa. Couples get treated to sparkling wine and chocolates on arrival, and the package includes daily buffet breakfast for two, 20 per cent off all Anantara spa treatments, Dine by Design dinner in a private desert setting – inclusive of a personal chef and butler service – and late check-out.

*From Dhs2,685 per couple for two nights, call 02-8862088.*

## ♥ A romantic escape

Whisk your loved one away on a flight of fancy to Ras Al Khaimah as a surprise. Seawings offers a thrilling 30-minute direct transfer flight which allows you to get a bird's eye view of Dubai from Dubai Creek, as you fly across the coast to Ras Al Khaimah. Upon landing, head to The Waldorf Astoria Ras Al Khaimah's newly opened Japanese restaurant, Umi, to indulge in teppenyaki, sushi and sake.

*Dhs795 per person for the seaplane ride, visit [seawings.ae](http://seawings.ae). Call 07-2035555 for restaurant reservations.*

## ♥ Spa date

Spend quality time with each other by booking the 180-minute Valentine's journey at Amara Spa, Park Hyatt Dubai, which includes a soothing 60-minute signature Amara couple's massage – a deep massage of frankincense, sandalwood and amber oil blends – a selection of dishes from the healthy spa menu, fresh juices, aromatic teas and light desserts enjoyed poolside.

*Dhs2,100 per couple. Call 04-6021660.*

## ♥ Make it a stay-cation

Treat yourselves to a city-break at Fairmont The Palm. It all begins with a limousine pick-up from home and bottle of premium bubbly and strawberries on arrival, and continues with a mud rasul treatment for two at Willow Stream Spa, seaside barbecue dinner at Seagrill on 25 degrees restaurant and lounge, and a romantic four course lunch served on the balcony. A luxurious setting, complete with four outdoor swimming pools and a beautiful beach are par for course! The relaxing,

love-filled weekend ends with a limousine drop-off.

*Dhs4,999 per couple. Call 04-4573388.*

## ♥ Retro revelry

Make it a musical date with the Wafi Rooftop picnic at the rooftop gardens, where an Abba tribute band will be performing on Friday the 14. The picnic hamper includes a generous selection of treats such as Scottish smoked salmon with Russian vegetable salad and artisan breads, cheese, walnuts and homemade chutney, pasta salad with tomato, pesto and buffalo mozzarella bocconcini, chilled roasted chicken, asparagus and goats' cheese quiche and New York style baked cheese cake, which you can tuck into while enjoying an alfresco musical evening.

*On from February 13-14, Dhs195 per person, call 04-3244100.*

## ♥ Be a sport

Sporty couples can go putting at mini-golf in Jebel Ali Golf Resort and Spa. The 18-hole course is a great way to spend a fun-filled afternoon, and you can follow up the game with a buffet lunch at La Fontana restaurant, as well as enjoy beach and pool access, to make a day of it!

*Dhs375 per person for resort day pass and lunch, additional Dhs20 for mini golf. Call 04-8145604.*

## ♥ Cook up a storm

There are few things as intimate as cooking in tandem. Why not plan to create a Valentine meal together, and in preparation, book yourselves into the 'Love is in the Air!' Couples cooking class at Scafa (School of Culinary and Finishing Arts)? The three-course menu includes grilled tuna salad with basil pesto dressing, fillet mignon with pepper cream and gratin Dauphinois and an indulgent chocolate fondant cake with vanilla whipped cream and dark chocolate strawberries. You can enjoy the meal at the café after the class, and take home the recipes for the big night.

*On February 12, Dhs500 per couple, visit [scafa.ae](http://scafa.ae). [GF](#)*



# Love is in the air

Whether it's a gourmet meal you want to treat your partner to or a night under the stars, Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach will make this Valentine's Day a romantic one.

## ■ Dinner à deux

### Rococo Valentine's Night

The modern Italian eatery will set the tone for the evening with an amuse-bouche which couples can tuck into together. The celebrations will then continue with a mouthwatering five-course set menu of dishes including red and black taglioni, edel flower sorbet, monkfish with black truffle and purple potato, and toasted white chocolate, strawberries and hazelnut tuile.

**7:00pm-11:30pm.** Dhs600 per couple inclusive of selected beverages and a glass of bubbly.



## ■ Under the moonlight

### Infini Pool Lounge

If you and your loved one prefer a relaxed, intimate evening, why not head to this outdoor lounge? Couples can gaze at the stars, sip special themed cocktails and champagnes (available in packages) and listen to tunes played by the resident DJ. Shisha lovers can also try the variety of flavours on offer.

*Free entry, package prices vary.*

## ■ Decadent brunch

### The Red Velvet Valentine's Brunch at A.O.C. French Brasserie

Begin the special day with an indulgent Friday brunch at this French brasserie, where you can rekindle your love over a selection of fresh seafood, foie gras, dishes from live food stations, a selection of desserts and French cheeses. The venue also boasts an expansive terrace, perfect for couples who want to make the most of cool temperatures while dining. This is also the ideal way to celebrate love with the entire family, if you're not in the mood for a romantic date.

**12.30pm-4pm.** Dhs230 per person with soft beverages, Dhs320 for house beverages and Dhs495 for unlimited bubbly. Complimentary for children up to the age of 12 (maximum two children per adult) and half price for children between age 13-17.



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On my bookshelf. . .



★ We ask the pros to tell us about the cookbook they can't live without.

**Justin Galea, Executive Chef  
Le Royal Meridien Abu Dhabi**

*Le Guide Culinaire* by Georges Auguste Escoffier, written over a century ago, is still one of the most important references in our craft today. Escoffier was one of the first real rock star chefs, his cuisine was eaten by celebrities. This is my all-time go-to book when I need inspiration in creating a dish. It's the basic rules to French haute cuisine; we have all used one of Escoffier's recipes or eaten one of his dishes, most of us just don't know it.

Watch this:

★ **The Little Paris Kitchen**  
*Fridays on BBC Lifestyle*  
at 9:00pm



Exotic hybrid Rachel Khoo (she is half Malay Chinese and half Austrian and grew up in England) celebrates her love of all things Parisian in this show. Sharing easy French recipes with a twist, from beef bourguignon and madeleines to croquet Madame muffins, in her tiny home kitchen in Paris – a cute, vintage-inspired setting, a little bit like her! – she demonstrates that French cuisine is more do-able than most think. On the show, she also meets Parisian chefs, bakers and local producers.



Download this:

★ **Vegetarian Recipes**  
Available free for iPhone

Now you have no excuse not to go meatless at least once a week! Flip through a selection of creative vegetarian recipes including tofu stir fry, zucchini lasagna, light eggplant parmesan, mixed vegetable curry, and tons of other nutritious, easy-to-make dishes. You can click on the trolley icon to add the ingredients of the recipe to your shopping list, or click the heart icon to add it to your favourites.

# Culina-reads

Reviews of the latest cookbooks, food shows and mobile apps.

## ★ **Save with Jamie** (Penguin Books)

If 2014 is the year you have dedicated to reducing food wastage, shopping smart and eating more home-cooked meals, this cookbook is for you! It begins with the ever-practical Jamie Oliver's top tips for budget-savvy grocery shopping (use local shops, markets, butchers, and don't shop when hungry, for instance), advice on how to freeze and store foods, and kitchen equipment essentials – great for novice cooks. Like everything else Jamie touches, the book makes food and cooking fun, above all else – whether it's from the funky recipe titles like Zombie brain (whole-roasted celeriac, mushroom sauce and barley), Bad boy bbq burritos, and Gangnam style chicken wings, or the cute illustrations and lifestyle imagery he uses. Each section features one main recipe (like a Sunday roast) that he titles the Mothership, followed by ideas for using up the leftovers from that dish, as well as other recipes using the main ingredient (veg, chicken, beef, lamb and so on). We love the rustic-styled images in typical Jamie style, and the little secrets on how to find a good steak, use leftovers, and step-by-step guides on jointing a chicken, that are carefully placed in between recipes. A collage with nutritional information on each recipe at the back completes the mix. Packed with useful information and advice, this book gives so much bang for your buck, that buying it is, in itself, a first step towards saving costs!

Dhs165, available at Jashanmal Bookstores



## ★ **100 best classic tapas** (Love food)

With tapas becoming a hot trend in the region at the moment, you might be tempted to recreate a Spanish sharing style menu for a gathering with friends at home. This

recipe book features a selection of authentic, traditional tapas dishes and is one you will definitely want to dive into every now and then. The first few pages give you an insight into the famous tapas culture, with a description of tapas bars or 'tapeo' in little villages in Spain. The recipes are split into categories by main ingredients – vegetables, nuts and olives, meat and poultry, fish and seafood, eggs and cheese and bread – with attractive images to accompany each. Ranging from easy options such as patatas bravas (spicy diced potatoes) to slightly more complex tapas like chorizo bread parcels, and sweet peppers stuffed with crab salad, this is a go-to guide for any lover of Spanish cuisine. And with its compact size, it will fit into any bookshelf – and home cook's life – with ease.

Dhs35, available at Jashanmal Bookstores



## ★ **Under a Mackerel Sky** By Rick Stein (Ebury Press)

Rick Stein might be better known for his adventures around the world, particularly across India, from his popular TV shows, but this candid memoir reveals all about this

British chef's formative years growing up in an Oxfordshire farm. It doesn't come as a surprise that his childhood revolved around food, when he talks about summers spent fishing with his dad in Cornwall, family holidays with his four siblings, and Sunday night suppers. The book follows him in his youth spent travelling – and working in food – around Australia and New Zealand to bring the reader to his finding success in restaurants. He also opens up about life as an innkeeper, his failed former marriage and elopement with current wife Sarah, and travels as a TV show host. Clearly a colourful personality who has led an adventurous life, his life story makes for far more interesting reading than any work of fiction! A must-read for his fans and foodies alike.

Dhs88 available at Amazon.



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INSPIRING GREAT BLENDS



## IN THIS SECTION



\* Five healthy suppers for five days, P37



\* Valentine's Day dinner menu to impress, P46



\* The perfect sharing-style alfresco meal, P52

# Home Cooking

Inspiring recipes for easy everyday meals and stylish weekend entertaining



Black Forest  
pudding, recipe p59



# Make it tonight

Cook something new midweek with these five easy recipes.

Recipes KATY GREENWOOD Photographs SAM STOWELL

## Chicken & cherry tomato lentils

SERVES 4 • PREP 5 MINS

• COOK 20 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Low fat**

**Iron** **1 of 5-a-day** **Gluten Free**

**500g skinless, boneless chicken thighs, cut into chunks**

**1 red onion, cut into wedges through the root**

**1 tbsp olive oil**

**200g cherry tomatoes**

**1 tbsp cumin seeds**

**500g Puy lentils**

**2 tbsp red wine vinegar**

**Handful of parsley, chopped**

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan.

Toss the chicken and onion with the oil, arrange on a baking tray and season.

Roast for 10 mins, then add the cherry tomatoes and sprinkle over the cumin seeds. Cook for another 10 mins.

**2** Meanwhile, cook the Puy lentils following pack instructions, then turn out into a large serving bowl. Once the chicken is ready, add everything to the bowl with the lentils and toss together. Stir in the red wine vinegar, parsley and seasoning to taste.

PER SERVING 356 kcals, protein 41g, carbs 31g, fat 9g, sat fat 2g, fibre 10g, sugar 5g, salt 1.7g



Food styling KATY GREENWOOD | Styling SUE ROWLANDS





## Peri-peri fish & chips with spicy peas

SERVES 2 • PREP 10T MINS

• COOK 35 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Low fat**

**Folate** **Fibre** **Iron** **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

**375g potatoes, cut into chips**

**1 tbsp olive oil**

**Juice of ½ a lemon**

**2 tbsp peri-peri marinade**

**300g frozen peas**

**1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped**

**½ garlic clove, crushed**

**Handful of mint leaves, finely chopped**

**2 white fish fillets (we used sea bass)**

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the chips with half the olive oil and half the lemon juice, arrange in a layer on a baking tray, then season. Cook for 25 mins. Stir the remaining lemon juice into the marinade.

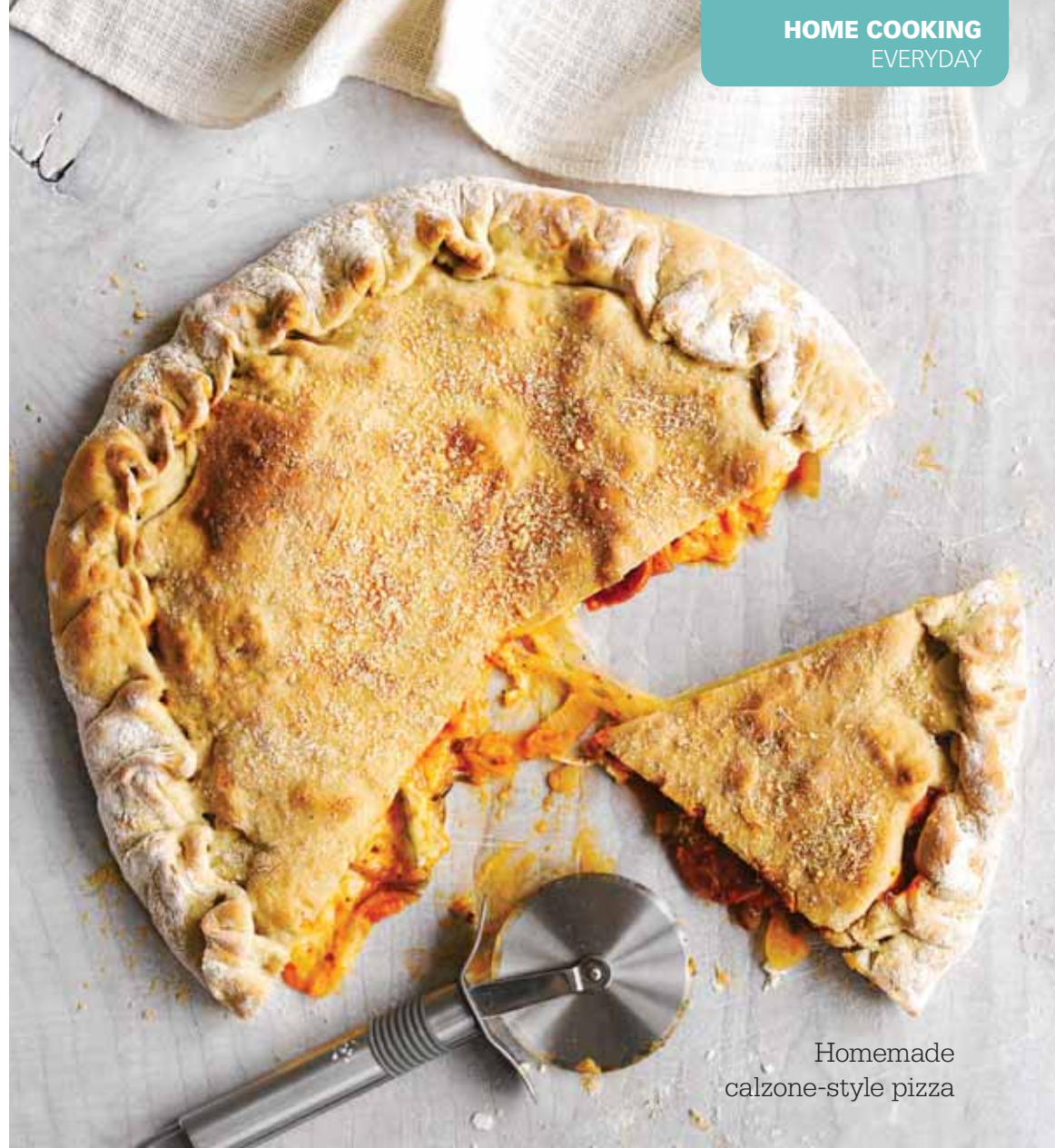
**2** Meanwhile, bring a pan of water to the boil and cook the peas for 2-3 mins, then drain. Return the peas to the empty pan and crush with the chilli, garlic, mint and the remaining oil. Season and keep warm.

**3** After 25 mins, turn the potatoes and move to the edges of the tray. Add the fish, skin-side up, and spoon over the marinade. Cook for another 10-12 mins until the fish is cooked through. Serve with the smashed peas.

PER SERVING 450 kcals, protein 41g, carbs 47g, fat 11g, sat fat 2g, fibre 10g, sugar 6g, salt 1.2g

### MAKE IT **Gluten Free**

Check that your brand of peri-peri marinade is gluten free.



Homemade calzone-style pizza

## Pizza pie

SERVES 2 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS

PROVING • COOK 15 MINS **Easy** **Vit C**

**UNCOOKED P**

**300g pizza base mix**

**Plain flour, for dusting**

**6 tbsp pasta sauce (we used arrabbiata)**

**8 slices pepperoni**

**1 small red onion, sliced**

**1 green pepper, deseeded and sliced**

**125g ball mozzarella, drained and chopped**

**Handful of oregano leaves or 1 tsp dried oregano**

**2 tbsp grated Parmesan**

**1** Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Make up the pizza base following pack

instructions. Knead on a lightly floured surface and divide into 2 balls, 1 slightly bigger than the other. Roll out the bigger ball to about 32cm diameter. Place the pizza base on a floured baking sheet or pizza tray.

**2** Top the pizza base with the pasta sauce, pepperoni, onion, pepper, mozzarella, oregano, 1 tbsp of the Parmesan and a little black pepper.

**3** Roll the smaller piece of dough to about 28cm diameter and place on top of the pizza filling. Fold the edge of the base over the top, pressing the edges together to seal – use a little water to help stick if you need to. Sprinkle over the remaining Parmesan and bake for 15 mins until puffed and golden.

PER SERVING 401 kcals, protein 19g, carbs 40g, fat 18g, sat fat 9g, fibre 4g, sugar 5g, salt 1.7g >>



Comforting supper

## Cheesy polenta with sausage ragout

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **Calcium** **1 of 5-a-day** **P**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 6 pork or beef sausages, skins removed
- 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 200ml chicken stock
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 4 rosemary sprigs, chopped
- 200g instant polenta
- 100g smoked cheese, grated

**1** Heat the oil in a large casserole dish over a medium-high heat and cook the onion and garlic for a few mins. Stir in the sausages, breaking them up into small pieces as you go, and cook for another 8-9 mins. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, stock, purée and most of the rosemary. Bring to a simmer and cook for another 8-10 mins or until the mixture is thickened. Season to taste.

**2** Meanwhile, make up the polenta following pack instructions. Remove from the heat and stir in the cheese, with some seasoning. Spoon the polenta onto 4 plates, then top with the ragout and a sprinkling of the remaining rosemary.

PER SERVING 574 kcals, protein 22g, carbs 53g, fat 31g, sat fat 12g, fibre 3g, sugar 8g, salt 3.1g

**LEFTOVERS** If you have leftover polenta, chill it, then cut into small pieces, fry in a little oil and serve instead of potatoes.

**MAKE IT** **Gluten Free** Use gluten-free sausages along with gluten-free stock.



Posh cheese on toast for one

## Mushroom & pepper melts

SERVES 1 EASILY DOUBLED ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 20 MINS **Easy** **V** **Folate** **Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ red pepper, sliced
- 1 Portobello mushroom, thickly sliced
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 tsp thyme leaves
- 1-2 slices crusty bread
- 75g Camembert or Brie, sliced

**1** Heat the grill to high. Put the oil, pepper, mushroom, garlic and thyme leaves in a bowl. Season well, then toss together.

**2** Heat a griddle pan over a high heat, and cook the pepper and mushroom slices for 10-12 mins, turning every so often, until softened and charred.

**3** Meanwhile, toast the bread on one side until golden. Pile the griddled veg and any of the remaining flavoured oil from the bowl onto the untoasted side of the bread. Top with the cheese and grill for 3-5 mins until bubbling and golden.

PER SERVING 431 kcals, protein 21g, carbs 20g, fat 29g, sat fat 12g, fibre 4g, sugar 8g, salt 1.5g **GF**

**LEFTOVERS** Add the leftover half of pepper to a pizza or salad. Or chop and stir into pasta sauce.



# VALENTINE

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# 5 ways with potatoes

This versatile ingredient is used across all cuisines. Deliciously earthy Jersey Royals will work best with these international recipes. Recipes CASSIE BEST Photograph STUART OVENDEN

## Roast spicy new potatoes

SERVES 6 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 40 MINS

Easy   

Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Put **750g halved new potatoes** in a pan of cold water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 8 mins until just cooked.

Drain well, then tip into a large baking tray and toss with **2 tbsp vegetable oil, 2 crushed garlic cloves, 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp black mustard seeds, 1 tsp cumin seeds, ¼ tsp chilli powder** and seasoning. Roast for 30-35 mins until the potatoes are crisp.

PER SERVING 122 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 19g, fat 4g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt none

## Herb & olive new potatoes with feta

SERVES 6 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK 12 MINS

Easy  


Put **750g new potatoes** into a large pan of salted water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 12 mins until cooked through.

Meanwhile, mash **50g soft butter** with **zest of 1 lemon, 2 tsp chopped oregano** and **black pepper**. Drain potatoes well, steam-dry for 2 mins, then toss with **25g sliced black olives, 85g crumbled feta** and the lemony butter.

PER SERVING 194 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 19g, fat 11g, sat fat 7g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.8g

## Potato parcels

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 45 MINS

Easy   

Heat oven to 220C/200C fan, or fire up the BBQ. Put **750g new potatoes** in a pan of cold water, bring to the boil and simmer for 8 mins. Drain well, then mix with **1 tbsp olive oil, 100g chopped semi-dried tomatoes, 4 unpeeled garlic cloves, 2 rosemary sprigs, 2 tsp balsamic vinegar** and lots of seasoning.

Layer 2 large sheets of foil, pile the potato mix into centre, then scrunch the edges to

seal. Put on a baking tray in the oven or straight onto the back of the BBQ (away from direct flames) for 35 mins.

PER SERVING 191 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 20g, fat 11g, sat fat 2g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.5g

## Potato salad

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS PLUS COOLING

• COOK 12 MINS    

Put **750g new potatoes** in a pan of salted water, bring to the boil, then simmer for 12 mins until cooked through. Drain and cool.

Whisk **75ml buttermilk, 2 tbsp light mayonnaise, 1 tbsp Dijon mustard, 1 tbsp vinegar** and **½ tsp caster sugar** with seasoning. Once spuds are cool, toss with the buttermilk dressing, **100g sliced radishes** and **1 tbsp poppy seeds or sesame seeds**, and sprinkle over a **20g pack mustard cress**.

PER SERVING 119 kcals, protein 3g, carbs 21g, fat 3g, sat fat 1g, fibre 2g, sugar 3g, salt 0.4g


## Potato & aubergine curry

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK 40 MINS

Easy   

Fry **1 sliced red onion, 2 crushed garlic cloves** and **10 curry leaves** in **1 tbsp vegetable oil** for 10 mins until the onion is softened. Stir in **3 heaped tbsp tikka curry paste** and cook for 2 mins more.

Add **400g can chopped tomatoes, 500ml vegetable stock, 500g new potatoes**, sliced into thick disks, and **1 aubergine**, cut into 2cm dice. Bring to a simmer, then cover and cook for 30 mins, removing lid for the final 10 mins. Stir in **400g can coconut milk** and bring to the boil. Season, scatter with a **small handful chopped coriander leaves** and eat with **rice** or **naan bread**.

PER SERVING 382 kcals, protein 7g, carbs 33g, fat 25g, sat fat 16g, fibre 8g, sugar 11g, salt 0.9g 

Potato salad







## WRITE A GASTRONOMIC LETTER THIS VALENTINE'S DAY

Create magnifique moments with delectable French and international flavours at A.O.C. French Brasserie with The Red Velvet Valentine's Brunch.

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# Eat well all week

5  
healthy  
meals

Who knew healthy suppers could be this delicious? Recipes LUCY NETHERTON  
Photographs SAM STOWELL

Steak  
& chips  
without  
the guilt



## Chimichurri steaks with sweet potato fries & onion rings

SERVES 4 • PREP 10 MINS

• COOK 35 MINS **Easy**

**Fibre** **Vit C** **1 of 5-a-day** **Gluten Free**

- 4 small sweet potatoes, cut into fries
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 large onion, cut into chunky rings
- 2 tbsp polenta or cornmeal
- Handful of parsley, chopped
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1 fat garlic clove, crushed
- 2 tbsp white wine vinegar
- 4 minute steaks (about 500g)

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Toss the sweet potatoes with 2 tsp of the oil, half the oregano and some seasoning, and arrange in a single layer on a flat baking tray lined with baking parchment.

**2** Put 1 tsp of the oil into a food bag with seasoning, add the onion rings and shake to coat. Add the polenta and shake again. Arrange on another tray and cook with the fries for 35 mins, turning halfway.

**3** Mix the remaining oil, the parsley, lemon zest and juice, garlic, vinegar and oregano with seasoning, and brush half over the steaks. Pan-fry for 30 secs each side, serve with fries, onion rings and remaining dressing.

PER SERVING 432 kcs, protein 28g, carbs 37g, fat 19g, sat fat 7g, fibre 6g, sugar 17g, salt 0.4g

## Low-fat turkey Bolognese

SERVES 4-6 • PREP 10 MINS • COOK

45 MINS **Easy** **Low fat** **3 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

400g lean turkey mince (breast has less fat than thigh mince)

2 tsp vegetable oil

1 large onion, chopped

1 large carrot, chopped

3 celery sticks, chopped

250g pack brown mushrooms, finely chopped

Pinch of sugar

1 tbsp tomato purée

2 x 400g cans chopped tomatoes with garlic & herbs

400ml chicken stock, made from

1 low-sodium stock cube

Cooked wholemeal pasta and fresh basil leaves (optional), to serve

**1** Heat a large non-stick frying pan and dry-fry the turkey mince until browned. Tip onto a plate and set aside.

**2** Add the oil and gently cook the onion, carrot and celery until softened, about 10 mins (add a splash of water if it starts to stick). Add the mushrooms and cook for a few mins, then add the sugar and tomato purée, and cook for 1 min more, stirring to stop it from sticking.

**3** Add the tomatoes, turkey and stock with some seasoning. Simmer for at least 20 mins (or longer) until thickened. Serve with the pasta and fresh basil, if you like.

PER SERVING (4) 267 kcs, protein 23g, carbs 15g, fat 13g, sat fat 3g, fibre 6g, sugar 12g, salt 1.3g >>

**MAKE IT** **Gluten Free** Use gluten-free stock and serve on a jacket potato or with polenta or gluten-free pasta.





## Sticky soy & honey pork with Asian noodles

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **P** **Low cal** **Low fat** **2 of 5-a-day**

2 tbsp low-salt soy sauce  
2 tbsp reduced salt and sugar ketchup  
2 tbsp clear honey  
1 tsp Chinese five-spice powder  
500g piece pork tenderloin, visible fat trimmed (can be swapped with beef)  
140g medium egg noodles  
2 tsp sesame oil  
175g pack baby sweetcorn & sugar snap peas, halved lengthways  
320g pack mixed pepper stir-fry veg  
Small bunch of spring onions, sliced

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Mix together the soy, ketchup and honey with the five-spice. Put the tenderloin on a baking tray and brush with just under half the sauce. Roast in the oven for 10 mins, then brush with a little extra sauce and return to the oven for a further 15 mins.

**2** Meanwhile, soak the noodles in boiling water until soft. Drain, reserving about 50ml of the water. Heat the sesame oil in a wok or large frying pan, add the corn and sugar snap peas, and stir-fry for 3 mins, adding the water to help the veg steam.

**3** Add the stir-fry veg and half the spring onions, and cook for 3 mins more until wilted. Tip in the noodles and the rest of the sauce. Using tongs, mix everything to combine. Remove the pork, cut into slices and serve on top of the noodles. Scatter with remaining spring onions.

PER SERVING 384 kcals, protein 32g, carbs 41g, fat 9g, sat fat 2g, fibre 6g, sugar 17g, salt 1.5g

## Baked fish with tomatoes, basil & crispy crumbs

SERVES 4 ● PREP 5 MINS

● COOK 25 MINS **Easy** **Low cal** **Low fat**  
**Folate** **Fibre** **Vit C** **3 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

2 x 400g cans cherry tomatoes  
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
3 tbsp basil pesto  
2 tbsp breadcrumbs  
4 skinless firm white fish fillets (about 140g each)  
320g pack green beans  
320g pack thin-stemmed broccoli

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Tip the tomatoes into a roasting tin, and stir in the vinegar and 1 tbsp of the pesto.

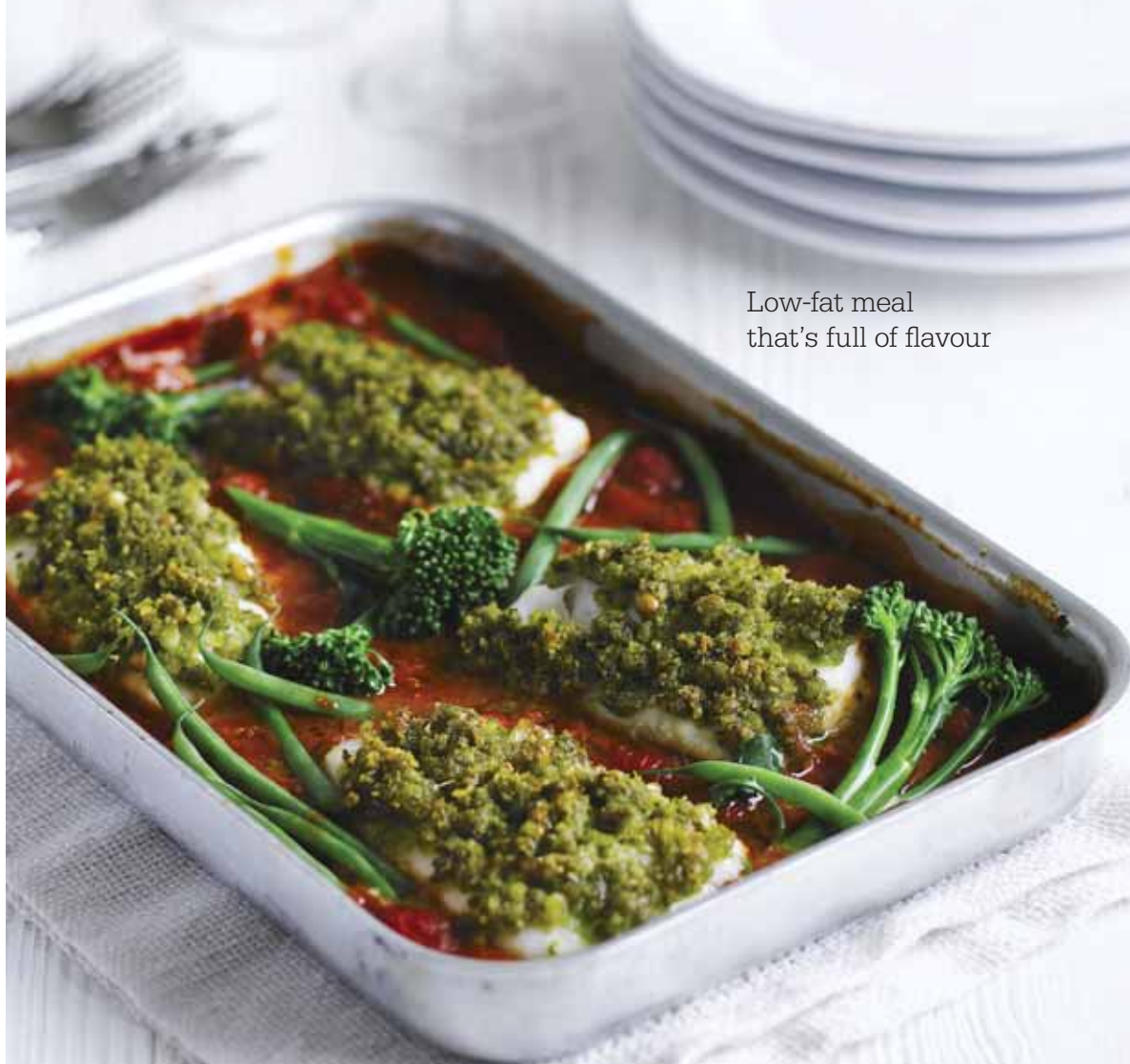
Season, mix, then bake in the oven for 10 mins.

**2** Mix together the remaining pesto and the breadcrumbs, then press onto each fish fillet. Add to the roasting tin and return to the oven for 12-15 mins until the fish flakes easily and the topping is slightly crisp.

**3** Meanwhile, boil the green beans and broccoli, then drain. Serve the bake scattered with the vegetables.

PER SERVING 257 kcals, protein 33g, carbs 16g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 7g, sugar 9g, salt 0.9g

**MAKE IT** **Gluten Free** Swap the breadcrumbs for a gluten-free variety, and check that your pesto is gluten-free.



Low-fat meal  
that's full of flavour





## Lighter moussaka with crunchy feta & oregano

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK

50 MINS **Easy** **Fibre** **Iron** **3 of 5-a-day**

300g extra-lean lamb mince  
1 tsp olive oil  
2 courgettes, finely chopped  
1 large aubergine, finely chopped  
140g red lentils  
2 tsp dried oregano  
680g passata with garlic & herbs  
1 low-sodium lamb or beef stock cube  
200g low-fat Greek yoghurt  
75g light feta  
2 tbsp breadcrumbs  
Salad and flatbreads, to serve (optional)

**1** Heat a dry non-stick pan and add the lamb, breaking it up with a fork. Cook until brown, then tip the meat into a bowl. Heat the oil in the pan and fry the courgettes and aubergines until golden, about 6-8 mins.

**2** Return the meat to the pan and add the lentils, half the oregano and the passata. Crumble in the stock cube. Fill the passata jar to about half full with water (about 340ml), swirl and add to the pan. Simmer for 25-30 mins until the lentils are tender, adding more water if you need to. Season to taste.

**3** Heat the grill to high. Mash together the rest of the oregano with the yoghurt, feta and some seasoning. Pour the lamb mixture into 1 large or 4 individual ovenproof dishes, spoon over the topping, scatter on the crumbs, then grill for 3-4 mins until bubbling. Serve with salad and flatbreads, if you like.

PER SERVING 423 kcals, protein 36g, carbs 36g, fat 16g, sat fat 8g, fibre 7g, sugar 14g, salt 1.3g



Mediterranean tart minus the calories

## Griddled vegetable & feta tart

SERVES 4 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 40 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low cal** **Low fat**

**2 of 5-a-day** **Good for you**

2 tbsp olive oil  
1 aubergine, sliced  
2 courgettes, sliced  
2 red onions, cut into chunky wedges  
3 large sheets filo pastry  
10-12 cherry tomatoes, halved  
Drizzle of balsamic vinegar  
85g low-fat feta, crumbled  
1 tsp dried oregano  
Large bag of mixed salad leaves and low-fat dressing, to serve

**1** Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Pop 33 x 23cm baking tray in the oven to heat up. Brush a griddle pan with about 1 tsp of

the oil and griddle the aubergines until nicely charred, then remove. Repeat with the courgettes and onions, using a little more oil if you need to.

**2** Remove the tray from the oven and brush with a little oil. Brush a large sheet of filo with oil, top with another sheet, add a little more oil and repeat with the final sheet. Transfer the pastry to the hot tray, pushing it into the edges a little.

**3** Arrange the griddled veg on top, then season. Add the tomatoes, cut-side up, then drizzle on the vinegar and any remaining oil. Crumble on the feta and sprinkle with oregano. Cook for about 20 mins until crispy and golden. Serve with the dressed mixed salad leaves.

PER SERVING 191 kcals, protein 8g, carbs 19g, fat 9g, sat fat 3g, fibre 5g, sugar 8g, salt 0.5g **GF**



James Martin's  
**KITCHEN**

# The magic of chicken soup

**Heathy choices**



There's nothing more soothing and comforting on a cold day than a big bowl of homemade chicken soup! BBC chef James Martin has created three deliciously warming recipes for you to choose from. Photographs STUART OVENDEN



James Martin's  
cock-a-leekie soup

**HEALTH BENEFITS** Not just 'good for the soul', chicken soup makes a nourishing, easy-to-digest meal – particularly if you're suffering from a cold or convalescing from illness. Chicken supplies immune-boosting nutrients and extra fluids for hydration. It also contains an amino acid called cysteine, which helps you to breathe more easily. These soups have the perfect combination of protein and carbs, while veg like leeks, garlic, tomatoes and carrots supply protective antioxidants.



## James Martin's cock-a-leekie soup

SERVES 6 • PREP 15 MINS • COOK

1½ HRS **Easy**  **1 of 5-a-day** **Good for you** 

*My twist on the Scottish classic soup – the prunes add a sweet contrast to the rich chicken broth.*

**1 tbsp vegetable oil**  
**1 medium chicken, jointed into pieces**  
**180g smoked bacon lardons**  
**2 carrots, chopped**  
**2 celery sticks, chopped**  
**1-2 leeks, washed and cut into thick rounds (tops reserved)**  
**Splash of white wine (optional)**  
**2 bay leaves**  
**½ bunch thyme sprigs**  
**15-20 stoned prunes**  
**Good-quality bread, to serve**

**1** Heat the oil in a large heavy-based saucepan until hot. Fry the chicken pieces in batches until golden brown, then remove and set aside. Add the bacon, carrots, celery and leek tops, and fry for 5 mins until it all starts to brown. Pour off any excess fat.  
**2** Splash in the wine and boil rapidly, scraping the bottom of the pan. Return the chicken pieces with the herbs and add enough cold water to cover. Slowly bring to the boil, then simmer for 40 mins until the chicken is tender.  
**3** Remove the chicken to a plate, cover with foil and leave to cool slightly. Strain the soup into a clean saucepan and discard all the other ingredients. Leave to stand for a few mins and skim off any fat that rises to the top. Pull the meat from the chicken bones and tear into large chunks.  
**4** Simmer the soup with the chicken, leeks and prunes for another 20-30 mins. Season to taste and serve with really good bread.

PER SERVING 337 kcals, protein 36g, carbs 9g, fat 16g, sat fat 5g, fibre 3g, sugar 8g, salt 1.1g



## Chicken noodle laksa

SERVES 6 • PREP 20 MINS PLUS  
STANDING • COOK 50 MINS

**Easy**  **Good for you** 

**1 medium chicken, jointed into pieces and skinned**  
**1 tbsp coriander seeds**  
**3cm piece ginger, sliced**  
**2 lemongrass stalks, crushed**  
**Zest and juice of 1 lime**  
**2 tbsp fish sauce**  
**1 tbsp low-salt soy sauce**  
**200ml light coconut milk**  
**3 garlic cloves, sliced**  
**3 red chillies, deseeded and sliced**  
**Handful of coriander, chopped (leaves and stalks kept separate)**  
**Bunch of spring onions, sliced**  
**300g cooked rice noodles**  
**Handful of mint leaves, chopped**  
**1 tbsp sesame oil (optional)**

**1** Put the chicken in a large saucepan with the coriander seeds, ginger, lemongrass, lime zest and a little salt.

Add enough cold water to cover, slowly bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer, gently poaching the chicken for 40 mins until it starts to fall away from the bone.

**2** Carefully lift the chicken onto a plate and cover with foil. Leave the stock to stand for 10 mins, skim off any excess fat and strain into a clean saucepan. Pull the chicken from the bones and tear into chunks.

**3** Bring the stock back to the boil, then add the fish sauce, soy, coconut milk, garlic, chillies and coriander stalks. Simmer for 2 mins, return the chicken to the pan and cook for a further 5 mins until warm. Add the spring onions and lime juice to taste.

**4** Divide the noodles between 6 bowls, then use a slotted spoon to lift the chicken and veg into each. Season the stock and pour over. Scatter with coriander and mint leaves, and serve with a drizzle of sesame oil, if you like.

PER SERVING 424 kcals, protein 37g, carbs 38g, fat 14g, sat fat 2g, fibre 3g, sugar 3g, salt 1.5g >>



## Mexican roast chicken & tomato soup

SERVES 4-6 • PREP 15 mins • COOK 1 hr

Easy Folate Fibre Vit C 3 of 5-a-day

1.5kg ripe tomatoes, halved vertically  
2 onions, cut into wedges

1 medium chicken, jointed into pieces  
2 tbsp olive oil, plus extra for shallow-frying  
3 garlic cloves, roughly chopped  
3 red chillies, deseeded and roughly chopped  
1 tbsp coriander seeds, crushed  
400g pinto or black beans, rinsed

Zest and juice of 1 lime  
4 tbsp chipotle paste  
3 corn tortillas, cut into triangles  
Large handful of coriander, chopped  
2 avocados, stoned, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces  
200ml soured cream (optional)

**1** Heat oven to 200C/180C fan. Put the tomatoes, cut-side up, in a large roasting tin with the onions and top with the chicken pieces. Season generously and drizzle over 1 tbsp of the olive oil. Roast for 45 mins until the chicken is crisp and tender, and the tomatoes start to caramelise.

**2** When the chicken is ready, remove from the oven to a plate and cover with foil. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the tomato and onions to a food processor and blitz until smooth. Reserve the cooking juices from the roasting tin.

**3** Heat the remaining oil in a medium saucepan and fry the garlic, chillies and coriander seeds for a few mins until just brown. Pull the meat from the chicken bones, tear into chunks and mix with the beans, lime zest and chipotle paste. Add this chicken mix to the pan but reserve one-third of it. Pour the soup into the pan and add enough of the cooking juices until you get a nice consistency. Heat a few inches of oil in a small saucepan, then carefully shallow-fry the tortilla pieces in batches until crisp. Drain on kitchen paper.

**4** To serve, gently reheat the soup, season to taste and stir through the coriander. Top with the reserved chicken mix, avocados and lime juice. Serve with the tortilla chips and soured cream, if you like.

PER SERVING (6) 557 kcal, protein 39g, carbs 33g, fat 28g, sat fat 10g, fibre 6g, sugar 13g, salt 0.6g





## *Love is in the air*

at the Radisson Blu Hotel,  
Dubai Media City

As it's this time of the year where we celebrate love, passion and affection with our loved ones. If you are looking to enjoy a true "Momenti d'Amore (moments of love)" and sure-fire romance, you can't go wrong with Certo that offers a delicious themed 5 courses set menu for:

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**AED 1200** per couple inclusive a bottle of bubbly Rosé.

Alternatively Chef's House will be offering an exceptional couple's Valentine's Day package where you and your special someone can indulge in our popular seafood night buffet dinner. Experience a lavish array of sensational fresh seafood dishes with mussels, clams, crabs, fish, prawns and shrimps, lobsters and jumbo prawns with your choice of dips, sizzling sauce and tantalizing flavors. Choose from a wide selection of the fresh catch of the day and ask the chef to prepare it to your liking.

**AED 595** per couple with house beverages & free flow of Prosecco Rosé.

This promotion is available for dinner only on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2014 from 7:00 pm onwards.

For details and further information on all Valentine's Day activities in our award winning restaurant please contact us on **04 366 9111**

**certo** ITALIAN RESTAURANT  
**chef's House**



# EAT.LOVE.STAY

Friday, 14th February 2014

CELEBRATE THE MOST  
ROMANTIC WEEKEND OF THE YEAR  
IN STYLE

AT THE

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This Valentine's weekend indulge in a romantic dinner at the stylish Cavendish Restaurant.

Book with us and receive a 10% discount on your Bonnington hotel accommodation\* with complimentary buffet breakfast for two.

You and your loved one are invited to enjoy a delicious cocktail at Healey's Terrace with our compliments. It is certainly the perfect way to begin or complete this special day.

\* Offer applicable for Deluxe rooms and Deluxe suites only.

\* Rooms and suites are subject to availability





# Kitchen notes

Nutrition advice,  
cooking tips and  
product picks for  
your pantry.

## Eating clean

A number of new organic brands are launching in the UAE and we couldn't be more excited about this growing green trend. Indian brand 24 Mantra Organic Foods is the latest to land on our shores, and bring over 200 certified organic products, ranging from cereals, lentils, whole and powdered spices, pastes, and masala mixes, to oils, health foods, snacks and juices, to Choithrams stores across UAE. The best part? The prices are affordable, so choosing organic no longer means breaking the bank!



## Fishy business

Oysters are a real romance food and also have aphrodisiac qualities, which makes them the perfect ingredient for a Valentine's Day menu! You can now order

fresh French Roumégous hollow

oysters from Tari and Fresh, a seafood store and home delivery service operated by Dubai Fishermen Cooperative Association, which sells Fine de Claire, Fine de Claire Verte and Special Roumégous oysters (Numbers 1 to 4) from Royal Oysters trading. Remember, when shopping for oysters, the number indicates the size and proportion to the weight, with the lowest number being the biggest in size with a weight of approximately 100 grams. Always make sure to buy oysters that are completely closed. Prices start from Dhs3.80 per piece, call 8007766.

## Look what we found!

### 3 great new products for your kitchen



This Tropical coconut blossom sugar is a great substitute for white sugar in pastries and cakes. Dhs22.50 at Maybury.

Ecomil's chocolate and vanilla flavoured almond milk tastes great with a bowl of cereal, or cooked with oats. From Dhs13.50 at Organic Foods and Café.



Drizzle this Yemeni Balquees honey over toast – it's a gourmet snack in a jiffy! From Dhs142 at Lafayette Gourmet.



## Reader tip of the month



When making baked potatoes, dice it beforehand and place in a pot of boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain the water, dry the potatoes on a kitchen towel, and then transfer to a greased baking tray – parboiled potatoes bake quicker.

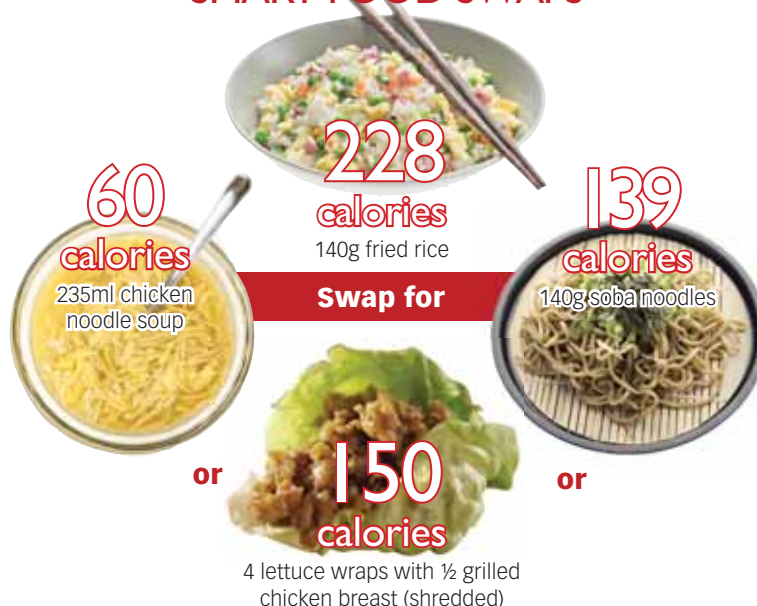
- Vinita Bhatia



Got a great tip you want to share?  
Get in touch with us on facebook or twitter



## SMART FOOD SWAPS



## Health update> YES, YOU CAN – TAKE CALCIUM SUPPLEMENTS!

A 2014 study published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition states there is no link between an increased risk of heart attack, and intake of calcium supplements – the connection between high intake of calcium and heart attacks was previously published in Heart journal. It is safe to take a calcium supplement in smaller doses – the body can only absorb 500mg at once – however the best source for calcium is through foods such as yoghurt (has 425mg per 225g), skim milk (306mg per cup), ricotta cheese (335mg for half a cup), and cooked spinach (146mg for half a cup). Our body requires calcium to improve nervous system, muscles and heart function. Bones store calcium to provide bodies with support. As we age, we absorb less amounts of calcium from food, which causes the body to extract calcium from our bones instead, and weaken them.

# Cook with *love!*

Forget only a man's heart, the way to anyone's heart is through the stomach, we think! So why not make your significant other a restaurant-style three-course Spanish meal this Valentine's Day? Juan Carlos Gonzales Hernandez, head chef of El Sur, The Westin Mina Siyahi Beach Resort and Spa, shows us how.

Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Friday  
14 February  
– don't  
forget!

## **Salmorejo (cold thick tomato soup)**

SERVES 2 ● PREP 30MINS ● NO COOK

Easy P

1kg ripe plum tomato

1 garlic clove

Fine sea salt

350g white bread, lightly toasted

100ml extra virgin olive oil

### **FOR THE FROZEN TOMATO POWDER**

1kg ripe plum tomato

Fine sea salt

### **FOR THE TOAST**

1 loaf of rustic bread, frozen

Iberico sliced ham (optional,  
available at Lafayette Gourmet)

**1** Blend the tomato, garlic and salt on high speed for 1 min. Break the bread in pieces and add it to the tomato. Blend again for 1 min on high speed. Add olive oil gradually and mix until it becomes a creamy texture – it should not be lumpy. Pass the salmorejo through a fine sieve and refrigerate until cold.

**2** To make the tomato powder, blend the tomato and freeze for six hours. Then place the frozen tomato mix in a clean muslin cloth over a sieve – on top of a bowl – for 16 hrs, to allow the water from the frozen tomato to fall into the bowl below. Place this water in a tray and freeze. When completely frozen, scrape with a fork to make granita.

**3** Cut the bread to about 10cm length and toast at 130C for 5-8 mins.

**4** Spoon the salmorejo into a deep bowl and place a toast on top with the ham, if using, on it. Garnish with the granita, drizzle olive oil all over and serve.



Juan Carlos Gonzalez Hernandez, a former El Bulli chef who has worked with the man himself, Ferran Adrià, among others, moved to Dubai from Cordoba in 2013, to open authentic new Spanish restaurant, El Sur. The Spanish chef grew up in Salamanca and completed his Chef and Cook's training at the Hotel School Bellamar in Marbella. Through his career, Juan has worked across different cities in Europe – including at the Gran Hotel Iberostar Budapest, Hungary, where he earned 13.5 Gault Millaut Guide points and won the title for sixth best restaurant in the world in just one year. Here he has created a Spanish-themed Valentine's Day menu to impress that special someone.

Text and styling NICOLA MONTEATH | Props from CRATE AND BARREL



**Sea bream with  
creamy cauliflower,  
cuttlefish tagliatelle  
and coriander mojo**SERVES 2 • PREP 60MINS • COOK  
15MINS **Easy**

2 fillets (150g each) of sea bream  
1kg cauliflower  
200g butter  
Salt

**FOR THE CORIANDER MOJO**

10g salt  
90g garlic  
60g parsley leaves  
40g coriander leaves  
350ml olive oil  
85g sherry vinegar  
40g almond powder

**FOR THE SEMI-DRY TOMATOES**

8 cherry tomatoes  
200g brown sugar  
65ml water

12ml soya sauce

3g ginger, peeled

**FOR THE CUTTLEFISH PASTA**

1 cuttlefish, cleaned, deboned and  
skinned

20ml olive oil

**1** Cook the cauliflower until tender. Add the butter and salt and blend to make a smooth, creamy paste.

**2** To make the mojo, blanch the garlic cloves twice in hot water and set aside. Grind the coriander and parsley leaves together and then blend with the garlic and other ingredients to make the mixture as thin as possible.

**3** Make a caramel with the brown sugar, water and soy sauce. Add the peeled ginger, and refrigerate overnight.

**4** Blanch the tomatoes, peel and keep in an ice water bath until it becomes cold. Drain the tomatoes, drizzle olive oil over, then roast at 180C for 6-8 mins.

**5** Dry the cuttlefish on paper towels to remove all moisture and then freeze for 4 hrs. Slice into strips the same width as tagliatelle pasta.

**6** Fry the sea bream skin side down on a heated pan with olive oil for 2 mins. Finish in the oven at 180C for 3 mins.

**7** Heat the cauliflower cream. Sauté the tomatoes with the soy caramel mixture. Spoon the cream on a plate and place the fish on top.

**8** In a heated pan, cook the cuttlefish tagliatelle for 10-20 secs and place on top of the fish. Garnish with the coriander mojo and tomatoes and serve. >>





## Torrija with coconut pastry cream and beetroot paper

SERVES 2 ● PREP 30MINS ● COOK 10MINS

200g brioche, crusts removed  
200g lemon ice cream  
23g sugar, to caramelise the torrija  
**FOR THE TORRIJA BATH**

1.5l milk  
1.5l cream  
750ml coconut milk  
260g gianduja chocolate (Available at Lafayette Gourmet)  
200g sugar  
10g salt  
Seeds from 3 vanilla pods

### FOR THE PASTRY CREAM

1l cream  
120g coconut gianduja  
100g sugar  
25g corn starch, dissolved with a little milk  
60g pasteurised egg yolk

### FOR THE BEETROOT PAPER

150g beetroots  
50g sugar

- 1 To make the torrija bath, mix all the ingredients and infuse the mixture by heating slowly on low heat for 15 mins.
- 2 Infuse cream and gianduja on low heat for 10 mins. Strain and pour into a clean pot. Mix the rest of the ingredients in and stir with a whisk.
- 3 Add the dissolved corn starch and bring the pastry cream to a boil. Remove from the heat and put cling film on top to prevent the pastry cream from forming a crust on top.
- 4 Cook the beetroot until tender. Peel and blend with the sugar to form a smooth paste. Using a spatula, spread the mixture very thinly on a silicone sheet and bake at 120C for 17 mins.

While the beetroot paper is still hot, cut into desired shapes and set aside to cool. Store in a container.

5 Microwave the brioche for about 30 secs. Warm up the torrija bath at the same time. Add the bread to the bath to let it absorb the liquid. Place the bread over a perforated tray to remove excess liquid – keep the liquid aside for later.

6 Place a dollop of butter in a frying pan, and when it browns lightly, add sugar to make a caramel. Place the brioche in the pan to caramelise and lightly warm on both sides. Add a few drops of the torrija bath to the pan to prevent it from burning.

7 Spoon the pastry cream on a plate and place the brioche torrija on top. Finish with a quenelle of lemon ice cream and garnish with beetroot paper. **GF**

This dessert will be the star of any romantic meal



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DSF Catalogue

# Modern Italian

Sergio Vineis, chef patron of Michelin-starred restaurant Il Patio in Pollone shows us how to give the universally popular flavours of Italy a creative twist. These recipes are sure to impress guests. Photographs ANAS CHERUR



Italian chef Sergio Vineis, chef patron of Il Patio in Pollone has spent 15 years in the kitchen, producing dishes with Mediterranean flavours, originality and a contemporary touch. Sergio pays great attention to ingredients and vegetables when cooking for guests at his Michelin-starred restaurant – he received the star in 2003 – and also teaches his son Simone the tricks of the trade. On a recent visit to Sofitel Dubai Jumeirah Beach, he showed us how to showcase beautiful ingredients with his recipes.

## Crispy egg

SERVES 4 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 30 MINS **Easy**

**4 fresh eggs**

**150g parmesan cheese**

**250g whipping cream**

**35g flour**

**Egg wash, to dip eggs in**

**140g bread crumbs**

**250g porcini mushroom**

**Extra virgin olive oil**

**1 garlic clove, chopped**

**Salt, to season**

**Pepper, to season**

**FOR THE BASIL OIL**

**50g basil**

**150ml extra virgin olive oil**

**1** Place the eggs in a baking tray and cook in a steamed oven at 60C for 20 mins.

**2** Melt the cheese with 100g whipping cream on the stove. Strain through a fine sieve and let the mixture cool. Whip the remaining cream, add the cheese sauce and put into a piping bag.

**3** Break the egg into a bowl and sprinkle with flour.

**4** Carefully dab egg wash over the floured egg and sprinkle bread crumbs all over. Fry for 2 mins.

**5** Dice the mushrooms and sauté with olive oil, garlic, salt and pepper.

**6** Blanch the basil leaves in hot water for 6 secs, cool in ice water. Strain and blend with olive oil.

**7** Place the mushrooms in a deep plate, pipe the cheese sauce on top and then place the fried egg in the centre of the plate. Drizzle the oil on top.





### Seared langoustine, buffalo mozzarella, cipolla rossa, semi dry tomato and mandarin oil

SERVES 4 • PREP 12 MINS

● COOK 5 MINS **Easy**

8 fresh or frozen langoustines  
500g red onions  
800g plum tomatoes  
1 garlic clove  
6g thyme  
8g salt  
4g pepper  
1 mandarin  
40ml extra virgin olive oil  
**FOR THE MOZZARELLA CREAM**  
150ml cream  
40ml milk  
200g buffalo mozzarella

- 1 Clean and remove the shell from the langoustines.
- 2 Cook the onions in the oven at 120C for 15-20 mins until soft.
- 3 Peel the tomato, cut in wedges and remove the seeds. Place in a roasting tray with garlic, thyme, salt and pepper. Dry in the oven at 80C for 3 hrs. Set aside to cool, then julienne.
- 4 Peel the mandarin and place the flesh with the olive oil in a bowl. Set aside for 12 hrs.
- 5 Heat the cream and milk, remove from the stove and add mozzarella cheese. Blend till it becomes a thick and creamy texture.
- 6 In a hot pan, quickly sear the langoustine with oil, salt and pepper.
- 7 Spoon cheese mixture on to a plate and then the semi dried tomato on top. Place the langoustine and onions on the side and drizzle mandarin infused oil all over.

### Risotto with butternut squash and roasted rabbit

SERVES 4 • PREP 12 MINS

● COOK 20 MINS **A little effort**

430g butternut squash  
500ml red wine  
4g thyme  
4g rosemary  
4g sage  
85g butter  
35g onion, chopped  
220g carnaroli rice  
1l vegetable stock  
2 rabbit loins (Available at Waitrose)  
40ml extra virgin olive oil  
65g onion, celery and carrots, chopped  
110g cream  
90g Parmesan cheese, grated  
Salt, to season  
Pepper, to season

- 1 Cut the butternut squash in half, remove the seeds and place in a roasting

tray. Cover with foil and bake until soft – for 15-20 mins. Remove the soft pulp with a spoon and blend to make a purée.

2 In a pot, pour in the wine with the aromatic herbs and let it reduce to half on low heat.

3 In a casserole, place 65g butter with onions and cook till it starts to turn golden colour. Add the rice and toast it for 1 min. Cover with hot vegetable stock and cook for 12 mins. Add the purée and cook for 6 mins further.

4 In the meantime, sear the rabbit in a hot pan with olive oil, salt and pepper. Cook the chopped vegetables with olive oil for 5 mins, place the vegetables on the bottom of a tray and the rabbit on the top. Roast in the oven at 180C for 7 mins.

5 Remove the rice from the heat, add 20g butter, cream, grated parmesan, salt and pepper to taste.

6 Place generous spoons of the risotto on a plate and the rabbit on top. Garnish with the wine reduction. **GF**





# Weekend lunch

While the sun is shining and temperatures are down, keep it simple with this help-yourself family meal.

Recipes ANGELA BOGGIANO

Photographs DAVID MUNNS

Green beans with mustard, lemon & mint

Tomato & carrot salad



# in the garden

## WANT TO GET AHEAD?

- The pastry for the pie can be made 2 days ahead and chilled.
- The cheesecake and the baked fruits can be made the day before and chilled.
- The pie can be made and baked 4 hours before eating.

Little Gem  
& pea salad

Creamy leek,  
potato &  
ham pie



## Green beans with mustard, lemon & mint

SERVES 6 ● PREP 10 MINS ● COOK 10 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **Good for you**

**400g green beans, trimmed**  
**25g butter**  
**Zest and juice of 1 lemon**  
**1 tbsp Dijon mustard**  
**3 tbsp chopped mint**

**1** Bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil. Add the green beans and cook for 5-6 mins until tender. Drain well and refresh under cold water. Set aside.

**2** When ready to serve, melt the butter in the saucepan and add the lemon zest and juice, mustard, a good pinch of salt and plenty of ground black pepper. Add the green beans and toss well until evenly coated. Tip into a serving dish, scatter over the fresh mint and serve.

PER SERVING 52 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 2g, fat 4g, sat fat 2g, fibre 2g, sugar 2g, salt 0.4g

## Tomato & carrot salad

SERVES 6 ● PREP 15 MINS

● NO COOK **Easy** **V** **Low fat**

**Vit C** **2 of 5-a-day** **Good for you** **Gluten Free**

**600g mixed ripe tomatoes, such as red and yellow cherry, plum and medium vine**

**2 medium carrots, peeled and finely shredded or grated**

**Bunch of spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped**

**1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped**

**25g pumpkin seeds**

**3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil**

**2 tbsp balsamic vinegar**

**1** Chop the large tomatoes, halve the cherry ones and tip into a large serving bowl. Add the carrots, spring onions, chilli and pumpkin seeds, and toss together.

**2** Mix the extra virgin olive oil with the balsamic, a pinch of salt and a good grinding of black pepper. Pour over the tomatoes and toss together.

PER SERVING 113 kcals, protein 2g, carbs 8g, fat 8g, sat fat 1g, fibre 3g, sugar 7g, salt 0.1g

## Little Gem & pea salad

SERVES 6 ● PREP 10 MINS

● COOK 2 MINS **Easy** **V** **Low fat** **Folate**

**2 of 5-a-day** **Good for you** **Gluten Free**

**4 Little Gem lettuces, each trimmed and cut into 6 wedges**

**300g peas, fresh or frozen**

**1 shallot, finely chopped**

**Juice of 1 lemon**

**1 tbsp Sherry vinegar**

**3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil**

**1** Put the Little Gem wedges in a large bowl or on a serving platter. Bring a medium saucepan of water to the boil, add the peas and cook for 2 mins. Drain well and refresh under cold running water until cooled. Add the well-drained peas to the lettuce and toss together.

**2** In a small bowl, combine the shallot, lemon juice and vinegar, plus a pinch of salt. Leave to stand for 10 mins, then add the olive oil and season with ground black pepper. Add the dressing to the Gem wedges and peas, and toss together.

PER SERVING 104 kcals, protein 4g, carbs 7g, fat 7g, sat fat 1g, fibre 4g, sugar 4g, salt 0.1g

## Creamy leek, potato & ham pie

SERVES 6-8 ● PREP 35 MINS ●

COOK 1 HR 10 MINS **A little effort** **V** **P**

### FOR THE PASTRY

**120g butter, cut into cubes**

**300g plain flour, plus extra for dusting**

**Good pinch of salt**

### FOR THE FILLING

**600g small floury potatoes, roughly the same size**

**2 tbsp olive oil**

**1 onion, finely chopped**

**500g leeks, roughly chopped**

**3 garlic cloves, finely chopped**

**3 tbsp snipped chives**

**150ml half-fat crème fraîche**

**200g Lancashire cheese, grated**

**200g thinly sliced ham**

**1 medium egg, beaten**

**1** First, make the pastry. Put the butter in a bowl with the flour and salt. Using

your fingertips, rub the butter into the flour until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Add about 6 tbsp water to the mixture and use a knife to mix together until you have a firm dough.

Cut the dough in half and shape each into a flat disc. Wrap in cling film and put in the fridge while you make the filling.

**2** Put the potatoes in a medium saucepan and cover with water.

Bring to the boil and simmer for 5-7 mins until part-cooked. Drain well and allow to cool.

**3** Heat the oil in a large saucepan.

Add the onion and leeks, and gently cook for 10-15 mins until they are very tender, being careful not to brown them. Add the garlic and cook for a few mins more, then remove from the heat, tip into a bowl and allow to cool. Stir in the chives.

**4** Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Put a baking tray in the oven to preheat. Roll out 1 disc of the pastry on a lightly floured surface to 5mm thick. Use this to line a 24cm round x 4cm deep pie tin, leaving any excess pastry to overhang the tin. Prick the pastry all over with a fork, place on the heated baking tray and bake for 10-12 mins. Return the baking tray to the oven.

**5** Slice the cooled potatoes into very thin rounds. Start to assemble the pie by arranging half of the potatoes in the base, then top with half the leeks, half the crème fraîche dotted over the top and half the cheese. Arrange half the ham on top, then repeat again with all the remaining ingredients.

**6** Roll out the remaining disc of pastry to about a 26cm circle. Brush the top edge of the pastry in the tin with the beaten egg. Lay the circle of pastry over the top and trim the edges, crimping with your fingertips or a fork to seal. Brush all over with the beaten egg and decorate the top with any leftover pastry cut into leaves or a decoration of your choice.

**7** Place on the hot baking tray on the lowest shelf and bake for 45 mins until golden. Set aside for 15 mins to cool in the tin before transferring to a wire rack to cool. Cut into wedges and serve.

PER SERVING (8) 511 kcals, protein 19g, carbs 43g, fat 29g, sat fat 16g, fibre 4g, sugar 4g, salt 1.4g >>



**Lemon cheesecake with  
baked plums & blackberries**

SERVES 8-12 • PREP 20 MINS

• COOK 50 MINS **Easy** 

200g shortbread biscuits  
25g butter, melted  
600g full-fat cream cheese  
75g golden caster sugar  
4 large eggs  
Zest of 1 large lemon  
3 tsp vanilla extract  
100ml soured cream

**FOR THE BAKED FRUIT**

8 plums, halved, stone removed,  
then cut into wedges  
300g blackberries  
100g light muscovado sugar

**1** Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Line the base of a 22cm round, springform tin with baking parchment. Put the biscuits in a food processor and whizz to fine crumbs. Tip into a bowl, add the melted butter and mix well. Press the biscuits into the base of the cake tin and put in the fridge to chill.

**2** Beat together the cream cheese and sugar with an electric hand whisk until smooth. Carefully add the eggs, 1 at a time with the lemon zest and vanilla extract until well mixed, but don't overwhisk. Pour the mixture onto the chilled biscuit base and bake in the middle of the oven for 50 mins until just set. Set aside to cool for 10 mins, then remove from the tin and allow to cool completely.

**3** Meanwhile, turn the oven up to 200C/180C fan. Put the plums, blackberries and sugar in a large roasting tin and toss together well. Bake in the oven for 10-12 mins until the fruits have collapsed and the sauce is syrupy. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

**4** When the cheesecake is completely cooled, spoon the soured cream over the top and spread in a thin layer. Serve in wedges topped with some of the baked plums and blackberries, and the rest on the side.

PER SERVING (12) 379 kcal, protein 8g, carbs 29g, fat 26g, sat fat 16g, fibre 2g, sugar 22g, salt 0.6g **GF**



A refreshing end  
to the meal

**MAKE IT** **Gluten Free** Use gluten-free biscuit in place of the shortbread.



# Keep them sweet

We have something for every occasion with these gorgeous bakes and desserts – perfect for treating friends and family. Recipes SARAH COOK and CASSIE BEST Photographs PETER CASSIDY

Keep the kids happy. Get everyone to choose their favourite toppings

## Ice cream cone cakes

MAKES 10 • PREP 15 MINS

• COOK 30 MINS **Easy**  BEFORE ICING

12 flat-bottomed ice cream cones

200g softened butter

200g plain flour

4 tbsp custard powder

1 tsp vanilla paste with seeds

200g golden caster sugar

2 large eggs, beaten

### TO DECORATE

350g butter, softened

350g icing sugar, sifted

2 tsp vanilla extract

Sprinkles, wafers, chocolate, glacé cherries, sauces – whatever you like on ice cream!

**1** Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Sit the cones in a muffin tin to hold them upright.

**2** Put the butter, flour, custard powder, vanilla, sugar and eggs in a large mixing bowl. Beat together with an electric whisk until smooth. If you have nimble-fingered little helpers, hand round pairs of teaspoons and set them to work filling the cones. If you're making them yourself, spoon the cake batter into a food bag or disposable piping bag, snip off the end to give you a wide hole, then pipe into the cones, filling them  $\frac{3}{4}$  full – this will enable you to get the batter right to the bottom.

**3** Bake the cone cakes, still in the muffin tin, for 30 mins until a skewer poked into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool.

**4** To decorate the cakes, beat the butter until smooth, then add the icing sugar and vanilla, and beat again until well mixed. Put into a piping bag fitted with a big star nozzle, then pipe icing on top of each cake as you would a cupcake. Decorate with sprinkles, cherries, drizzles of sauce – whatever you like.

PER CAKE 756 kcs, protein 4g, carbs 77g, fat 47g, sat fat 29g, fibre 1g, sugar 56g, salt 1.0g

**SUNDAE FUN** Add a hidden surprise to your cone cakes. Before you ice them, use an apple corer to remove a central core of sponge. Fill with an ice cream sauce of your choice, then ice and decorate the top, hiding and sealing the sauce.



**Sticky treacle,  
ginger & lime cake**CUTS INTO 10-12 SLICES ● PREP 45  
MINS ● COOK 1 HR 20 MINS **Easy** ❄️**200g butter****200g dark muscovado sugar****175g black treacle****2 tbsp ginger syrup****250ml full-fat milk****2 large eggs, beaten****325g plain flour****1½ tsp bicarbonate of soda****2 tsp ground ginger****75g stem ginger, chopped****Zest of 2 limes****4 tbsp lime marmalade or lime curd****FOR THE ICING****Zest of 2 limes, plus juice of 1****140g icing sugar****1 tbsp amber sugar crystals or 5  
sugar cubes**

**1** Put the butter, muscovado sugar, treacle and ginger syrup in a saucepan. Heat for a few mins, stirring occasionally, until the butter has melted and the sugar has dissolved. Set aside to cool for 5 mins.

Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Grease and line the base and sides of a 20cm-deep round cake tin with baking parchment.

**2** Whisk the milk into the butter mixture, then add the eggs and beat well to combine. In a large bowl, mix the flour, bicarb and ground ginger. Pour in the buttery liquid and stir well to combine, making sure there are no pockets of flour. Add the stem ginger and lime zest, and stir again.

**3** Pour into the cake tin and bake for 1 hr 15 mins. To check if the cake is cooked, insert a skewer into the centre of the cake – if any uncooked cake mixture sticks to the skewer, return the cake to the oven for a further 10 mins, then check again. Leave to cool in the

tin for 10 mins, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

**4** Split the cake into 2 or 3 layers with a long, serrated knife. Spread the lime marmalade or curd between the layers then reassemble.

**5** In a small bowl, mix the lime juice and icing sugar until thick and smooth, adding a little extra icing sugar if it's too runny. Transfer to a sandwich bag, squeeze down into one corner and twist shut, then snip off a tiny bit of the corner. Drizzle in stripes over the cake. Using a pestle and mortar, crush the sugar crystals or cubes, with half the lime zest, to a chunky rubble and scatter over the top of the cake. Finish by sprinkling with the remaining zest.

*Will keep in a tin for up to 1 week – it tastes great on the day it's made, but even better after a day or two in the tin.*

PER SLICE (12) 442 kcals, protein 5g, carbs 70g, fat 16g, sat fat 10g, fibre 1g, sugar 50g, salt 0.8g >>

**SUNDAE FUN** If you're camping or self-catering, make this scrummy cake before you go. It tastes even better the longer you leave it in the tin.





## Honeyed peach & pistachio Pavlova

SERVES 8-10 ● PREP 40 MINS PLUS OVERNIGHT COOLING ● COOK 1 HR 10 MINS **A little effort**  **Gluten Free** 

5 large egg whites

175g golden caster sugar

100g light brown sugar

1 tsp cornflour

1 tsp white wine vinegar

### FOR THE TOPPING

100ml clear honey, plus 2 tbsp

5 ripe but firm peaches, peeled if you like, and thickly sliced

300ml pot double cream

Seeds from 1 vanilla pod or 2 tsp vanilla bean paste with seeds

200ml pot Greek yoghurt

85g pistachios, roughly chopped

**1** Heat oven to 160C/140C fan. Using a 20cm plate or cake tin as a template, draw a circle on a large sheet of baking parchment, flip it over and place on a large baking tray. When ready, dot a blob of raw meringue onto each corner of the baking tray and put the baking parchment on top – this way it won't slip.

**2** In a well-cleaned, grease-free bowl, whisk the egg whites with an electric hand whisk until they form stiff peaks. Add the caster sugar, 1 tbsp at a time, continuing to whisk as you go. The meringue will start to get thick and glossy. Add the brown sugar in the same way, continue whisking for another 1-2 mins until really thick and holding stiff, shiny peaks on the end of your whisk. Now add the cornflour and vinegar, and give a final whisk until smooth.

**3** Using a large metal spoon, pile the meringue onto the parchment-lined tray, using the circle template as a guide to create a symmetrical circle. Use the spoon to make a dip in the middle (this will hold your cream and fruit later) and a few spikes of meringue around the edges. Place in the centre of the oven, shut the door and immediately turn the temperature down to 140C/120C fan. Cook the meringue for 1 hr 10 mins, then turn the oven off and leave until completely cold (best done overnight).

**4** For the topping, put the 100ml honey in a wide frying pan and heat until

saucy. Add the peach slices and cook for 1-2 mins on each side, over quite a high heat, until the peaches are sticky but still holding their shape. Cool completely.

**5** Just before you are ready to serve, assemble the Pavlova. Tip the cream, vanilla and remaining honey into a bowl. Whisk until it just holds soft peaks, then

add the yoghurt and, using a spatula, fold together until combined. Spoon the cream into the centre of the meringue and swirl it out towards the edges. Top with the sticky peaches and any saucy bits from the pan, and sprinkle over the pistachios.

PER SERVING (10) 392 kcal, protein 5g, carbs 43g, fat 22g, sat fat 12g, fibre 2g, sugar 43g, salt 0.1g






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a picnic or BBQ



### Black Forest pudding

SERVES 6-8 • PREP 50 MINS PLUS  
OVERNIGHT CHILLING • COOK  
10 MINS **Easy**  **Low fat**  **Vit C**  **1 of 5-a-day**

**Sunflower oil, for greasing**

**300g blackberries**

**300g dark cherries, halved and  
stoned, or quartered if large**

**200g small black seedless grapes**

**140g golden caster sugar**

**200g blackcurrants**

**200g blueberries**

**4 tbsp crème de cassis**

**(or 2 tbsp Ribena, a fruit drink  
concentrate)**

**400g medium-sliced white bread**

**Clotted or single cream, to serve  
(optional)**

**1** Brush a 1.5-litre pudding basin with oil – if you don't have a 1.5-litre pudding basin, use a smaller one and serve any fruit that won't fit on the side. Line the basin with a double layer of cling film, overhanging the basin at the top.

**2** Put the blackberries, cherries, grapes and sugar in a saucepan with 3 tbsp

water. Cover and gently heat, stirring occasionally, until the sugar has melted and the fruit is syrupy. Add the currants and blueberries, cover and cook gently for 2 mins more until the fruit is just softened. Take off the heat and cool.


**3** Strain the fruit into a colander set over a bowl. Leave for 5 mins to drain well, then stir the cassis or Ribena into the captured juices. Trim the crusts from the bread slices and discard, losing as little bread as possible. Then use a pastry brush to spread a little of the berry juices over one side of each slice. Cut a circle from 1 slice (or 2 semi-circles from 2 slices) that will neatly cover the base of the basin, and push in – juice-side down.

**4** Reserve some bread so that you have enough to cover the top of the basin, then halve the remaining slices into fat fingers – trimming to the correct length to line the sides of the basin. Then, juice-side down, work round the basin, overlapping the edges of the bread slightly and pressing them to stay in place, until the basin is completely lined with bread. Patch any gaps with scraps.

**5** Reserve a couple of spoonfuls of fruit to

serve, then spoon the remainder into the bread-lined basin, squishing the fruit down to level it. Reserve 150ml of the juices with the reserved berries, then pour the rest into the basin, concentrating on pouring it around the edges to soak into the bread. Jigsaw the reserved bread to neatly cover the top and seal in the fruit, this time placing it juice-side up. Loosely cover the top of the basin with cling film. Find a small plate that will fit snugly inside the basin so it is in contact with the pudding and add 4 x 400g cans to weigh it down. Chill overnight with the reserved juice and berries.

**6** To serve, unwrap and invert the basin onto a serving plate with a lip to hold any juices. Lift off the basin, holding the cling film down tightly as you pull to help you remove it. Peel off the cling film round the pudding. If you've any white bread patches visible, spoon over some juice to colour it. Spoon the rest of the berries and juice onto the top of the pud and serve with clotted or single cream, if you like.

PER SERVING (8) 269 kcs, protein 5g, carbs 54g, fat 1g, sat fat none, fibre 4g, sugar 35g, salt 0.6g 





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DUBAI




# Love at first bite

These cute cookies would make a lovely gift for someone special on Valentine's Day.

Recipe CASSIE BEST Photograph JONATHAN KENNEDY

## Love bug biscuits

MAKES 20 • PREP 30 MINS PLUS  
CHILLING • COOK 12 MINS 

**175g plain flour**  
**100g chilled butter, cubed**  
**85g icing sugar**  
**1 tsp vanilla extract**  
**1 egg yolk**  
**TO DECORATE**  
**500g ready-to-roll fondant icing**  
**Red food colouring**  
**100g icing sugar**  
**Black food colouring**  
**Edible pearly balls (available at Lafayette Gourmet)**  
**YOU WILL ALSO NEED**  
**8cm heart-shaped cutter**  
**6cm heart-shaped cutter**

**1** Put the flour, butter, sugar, vanilla and egg yolk in a food processor. Dribble in 1 tbsp water and blitz until the mixture comes together to form a dough. Tip onto a work surface and knead briefly to bring together, then


wrap in cling film and chill for 20 mins.

**2** Heat oven to 180C/160C fan. Roll out the dough to the thickness of around 3mm. Use your 8cm heart cutter to stamp out heart shapes – you'll have to re-roll the trimmings to make 20 biscuits. Put the hearts on 2 baking trays and bake for 12 mins, swapping the trays over halfway through, until pale golden and crisp. Leave to cool on a wire rack.

**3** Dye your lump of fondant icing with red food colouring and wrap in cling film until ready to roll.

**4** Mix the icing sugar with enough water to make a thick icing. Dye the icing with the black food colouring. Pour the icing into a piping bag with a small plain nozzle attached (or use a small sandwich bag and snip off the corner). Roll out the red icing to 3mm thick and use your 6cm cutter to stamp out hearts. Stick onto the biscuits with a little of the black icing.

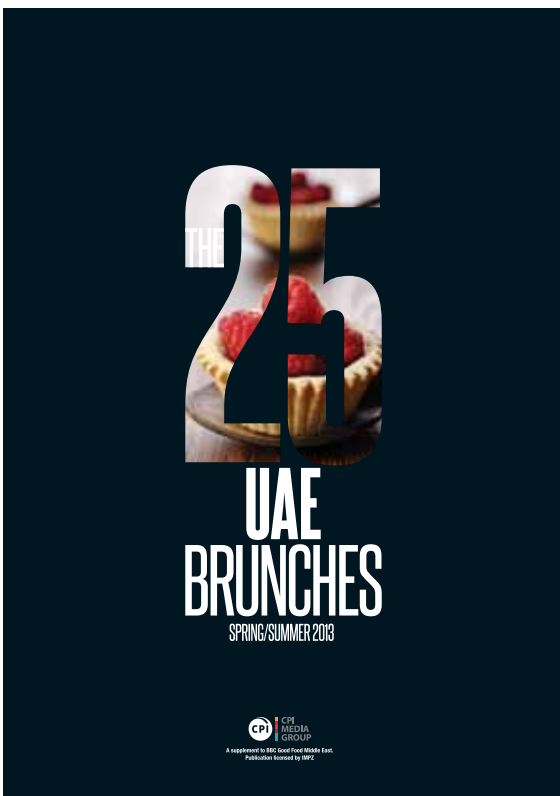
**5** Use the black icing to give your love bug a head at the pointy end, draw a line down the centre to give it wings, then add spots. Stick 2 pearly balls onto each love bug's head, then leave to set on a wire rack.

PER BISCUIT 166 kcals, protein 1g, carbs 29g, fat 5g, sat fat 3g, fibre none, sugar 22g, salt 0.1g 

**TIP** You can pack your love bugs into boxes or cellophane bags to give as gifts for Valentine's Day.

From the publishers of *BBC Good Food Middle East*

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# Gourmet Lifestyle

Travel, global cuisines, health, interviews, kitchens and more



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## IN THIS SECTION

- \* Everything you ever wanted to know about cheese, **P64**
- \* Meet India's original masterchef Sanjeev Kapoor, **P68**
- \* A look inside Hairy Biker Si King's kitchen, **P72**
- \* Kyoto is Japan's best kept culinary secret, **P78**

# FROMAGE FACTS

Explore the world of cheese with the experts who dish out on everything from cheese storage and TLC, to the different varieties and ways to truly relish it. By Nicola Monteath.

## CHEESEMONGER'S GLOSSARY

A FEW TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

**AFFINAGE** The French word describes the maturing and ageing of cheese. During this period the bacteria changes in texture from grainy to smooth, moisture evaporates and the flavour of the cheese develops.

**BLOOMY RIND** A soft coating of penicillium mould on cheeses such as brie.

**CAVE** A temperature and humidity controlled area where the process of maturing cheese takes place.

**CHEVRES** The plural form for goat, in French, which classifies it as goat's cheese.

**LACTOSE** A natural sugar found in milk. During ripening, lactose is converted into lactic acid, which helps enhance the flavour of cheese.

**PASTE OR PATE** The main part of the cheese.

**PIQUANT** A cheese with a sharp flavour, or enticing aroma.

**RIND** The hard outer coating of cheese that helps control loss of moisture when cheese is ripening.

## IT'S ALL IN THE MILK!

The flavour profiles of cheese differ according to the type of milk used in production. Cheese made from goat's milk has a sour taste due to the high acidity in milk, while sheep's milk cheese has a nutty, buttery and creamy taste due to the high percentage of fat content in it. Cow's milk cheese, on the other hand, is typically mild in flavour and can sometimes be milky or creamy.

## Did you know?

The largest cheese producer in the world is the US, followed by Germany and France. The American and Germans produce industrial, processed cheese, while the French have the biggest selection of artisanal and farmhouse cheeses in the world.

## The ULTIMATE CHEESEBOARD

The key to an impressive cheese platter is a balance of various milk cheeses. Here are some highly recommended types of hard and soft cheeses to adorn your board with.

**Goat's cheese:** Crottin de chavignol and Sainte Maure

**Sheep's cheese:** Roquefort and ossauiraty

**Cow's cheese:** Camembert, Saint Felicien, reblochon, French Epoisees and Comte.

**Serve with:** Raw almonds, walnuts, pears, dried apricots, fig jam, rye biscuits, walnut bread and undressed salad leaves.



## GET COOKING

There's really nothing quite like gooey melted cheese in, well, anything really! Here are a few ideas to help give a dish cheesy pizzazz:

- A grilled cheese sandwich tastes delicious with emmental or cheddar – industrial processed cheese works best for this!
- Sprinkle grated parmesan cheese over pasta to let it melt in; use chunky flakes for salads.
- A cheese fondue is incomplete without Raclette cheese.
- Baked Camembert or Brie cheese pairs perfectly with figs, honey and walnuts. For a savoury option, serve it with garlic bread.

## The healthiest kind!

Goat's milk cheese is the most nutritious as it has a low percentage of fat, while sheep's milk cheese has a high fat content.

## TUROPHILE

The name used to describe a cheese lover. The word is taken from the Greek word *turos* (cheese) and *phil* (love).

## CHEESE CHECKLIST

- \* A cheese board isn't complete without a good set of knives. This Vivo 3 piece cheese knife set made of stainless steel and wenge pakkawood handles is sleek and sturdy. Dhs330 from Tavola.
- \* Serve an assortment of cheeses in style on this gorgeous Lunares platter. Dhs450 for the set at Bloomingdale's Home.
- \* Cheese aficionados will love cutting brie with this stainless steel Just Slate cheese wire with a heart design. Dhs90, at Tavola.



## THE VARIETIES

**FRESH:** This type of cheese does not have a rind and isn't aged. Some fresh cheeses are thickened by culturing or souring the milk with either citric acid, lemon juice, vinegar or buttermilk.

**SOFT CHEESE:** These cheeses are great for salads or to spread on crackers and bread. Rich and creamy soft cheeses such as Feta, Brie and cottage cheese are some of the main types from this category.

**WASHED-RIND:** These type of cheeses – usually referred to as 'stinky or smelly' cheese – are bathed or scrubbed with salt water brine or spirits, to encourage culture such as Brevy (*Brevibacterium Linens*) to grow on the surface. The cheese is aged for at least two months and has a semi-soft to semi-firm texture. French Epoisses and Taleggio are some of the popular examples of this cheese.



**SEMI HARD:** Cheddar, Gouda, Beaufort and Asiago are a few of the cheeses in this category. They are usually pressed during

production to remove moisture, and become firmer and crumbly as they age. The cheese has a mild aroma and nutty, buttery characteristics.



**HARD:** As the name suggests this dry, aged cheese is hard to the touch, has no moisture and is great for crumbling and grating.

Some of the best kinds are Parmesan and Pecorino Romano as well as aged Gouda and Cheddar. They have a more pungent flavour.



**BLUE CHEESE:** This cheese has green, grey, blue or black veins or spots which is ripened with cultures of the mould *Penicillium*. The cheese is spiked with stainless steel rods to allow oxygen to circulate and allow the mould to grow. Danish blue, Roquefort and Stilton are well known blue cheeses.



## SERVING CHEESE

Cheese should always be served at room temperature, as the cold mutes the taste as well as the aroma. The texture, especially for soft cheeses, are suppler at room temperature as well.

## STORE IT RIGHT

To make sure your cheese is kept fresh and in good condition for weeks, take it out of its original packaging and wrap it in cling film or waxed proof paper as soon as you get home. Place the wrapped cheese in a tupperware container lined with dampened tea towels and white sugar cubes. The sugar creates humidity in the box, takes away odours and keeps the cheese fresh for up to three weeks when refrigerated.

4

The number of production categories for cheese. These include mass-produced cheese (made in large quantities in factories), specialty cheeses (made in smaller amounts), artisan cheeses (made in small batches by cheese producers or individuals who use traditional methods) and farmstead cheeses (made by hand, with milk from the farmer's own animals or on the same farm).



## CHEESE CONNOISSEURS

## THE EXPERTS WE TALKED TO:

- \* Gérard Poulard, a Cheese Master from France
- \* Patricia Michelson, founder of La Fromagerie cheese shops in UK and cheese consultant at Jones the Grocer
- \* Elie Makhoul, Cheese specialist at Lafayette Gourmet

# Feel good food to eat now

**NEW  
IDEAS  
FOR  
2014**

Stock your storecupboard with these versatile ingredients to get your year going on a healthy note, advises health expert Natalie Savona.



Photographs AMANDA HEWITT | Food styling CAROL TENNANT | Styling JENNY GLEDEN



**RAPESEED OIL****Why is it good for me?**

Yellow fields of rapeseed have traditionally been grown for animal feed. However, some growers are now producing cold-pressed oils for us to enjoy. Once unpalatable, it has now been bred to eradicate any bitterness. Rapeseed oil is over 60 per cent monounsaturated fat, the type that olive oil is famous for – with all the associated benefits of the ‘Mediterranean diet’, which is so good for the heart. Yet it contains only half the saturated fat of olive oil. A tablespoon of this golden goodness will also give you over half your daily need of antioxidant vitamin E.

**Add to your diet** Use as an alternative to olive oil in cooking, for roasting and for frying. The monounsaturated content also means rapeseed oil retains its benefits even when heated to frying point.

**PEARL BARLEY****Why is it good for me?**

This storecupboard staple usually shows up in soups or stews. But barley is a lot more than just a cheap filler. As a wholegrain, pearl barley retains a substantial amount of fibre, providing 3.8g per 100g of cooked grain. Like oats, barley contains the soluble fibre, beta-glucan, useful for lowering cholesterol and delivering a slow release of energy. A 100g portion of cooked barley will also provide about an eighth of your daily dose of vitamin B3 (niacin), essential for energy and a healthy nervous system.

**Add to your diet** In addition to traditional soups or hotpots, use as an alternative to risotto. ‘No need to soak’ mixes can be added straight to your cooking and are ready in 10 minutes. You can use pearl barley instead of rice or wild rice in salads.

**SOYA BEANS****Why are they good for me?**

Soya has shed its worthy health food reputation from its incarnation as tofu or soya milk, with the beans – also known as edamame beans – now easy to buy. They are a great source of protein and essential amino acids, so are particularly good for vegetarians and vegans. They’re also great value, with bags of frozen beans available at most supermarkets (they cost around £1.11).

Some studies suggest that menopausal women should eat soya to help balance their hormones. But for this reason, there are concerns that children should not eat soya in large amounts. Ideally, buy organic to avoid genetically modified soya.

**Add to your diet** Use soya beans instead of broad beans or peas in recipes, or add to soups, stews and risotto. They also make a great side veg tossed with mint.

**QUINOA****Why is it good for me?**

A real protein-powerhouse (providing twice as much as brown rice), this versatile grain is a great choice for everyday meals as it is quick and simple to cook. A relative of leafy green veg like spinach and Swiss chard, quinoa is suitable for vegetarians or vegans, and is also gluten-free. Quinoa (pronounced ‘keenwa’) is high in fibre, with one portion giving you the equivalent of a portion of prunes. This native South American ingredient also packs a real punch when satisfying healthy appetites as it has a good satiety factor – meaning it keeps you feeling fuller for longer.

**Add to your diet** With its mild, nutty flavour, quinoa can be used in place of couscous or rice – it takes just 10 minutes to cook. For a substantial salad, add chopped herbs, leaves and a favourite dressing.

**SARDINES****Why are they good for me?**

Oily fish are hailed for their unrivalled omega-3 fat content – good for the heart, blood vessels, blood pressure, brain, joints and more.

Tinned sardines are convenient and great value, too, and because the bones are edible, there is plenty of calcium in them. A 100g serving will give you 380mg of calcium, over half an adult’s daily needs. They also provide vitamin D – 100g of canned sardines gives you at least the recommended daily dose of 200IU. Vitamin D deficiencies are increasingly linked to cancer, cardiovascular problems, auto-immune diseases such as multiple sclerosis, and weak bones.

**Add to your diet** Try sardines on toast, or chop them roughly and add to pasta. Sardines are easily available at most supermarkets.

**HONEY****Why is it good for me?**

Honey, a natural form of sugar, adds extra flavour to your cooking. It has been used for centuries as a wound healer for its antibacterial and antiseptic properties – the traditional honey and lemon hot drink is still a good way to soothe a sore throat.

Honey is 97 per cent sugar, though, so use judiciously as it can contribute to tooth decay and weight gain. To get the best from its healthy properties, use honey gathered by bee keepers who do not heat, process or blend it. Manuka honey from New Zealand has very powerful properties – but is far too expensive to cook with!

**Add to your diet** Honey adds a rich sweetness to savoury dishes as well as desserts and it is often used in Middle Eastern and Asian cooking.

**BRAZIL NUTS****Why are they good for me?**

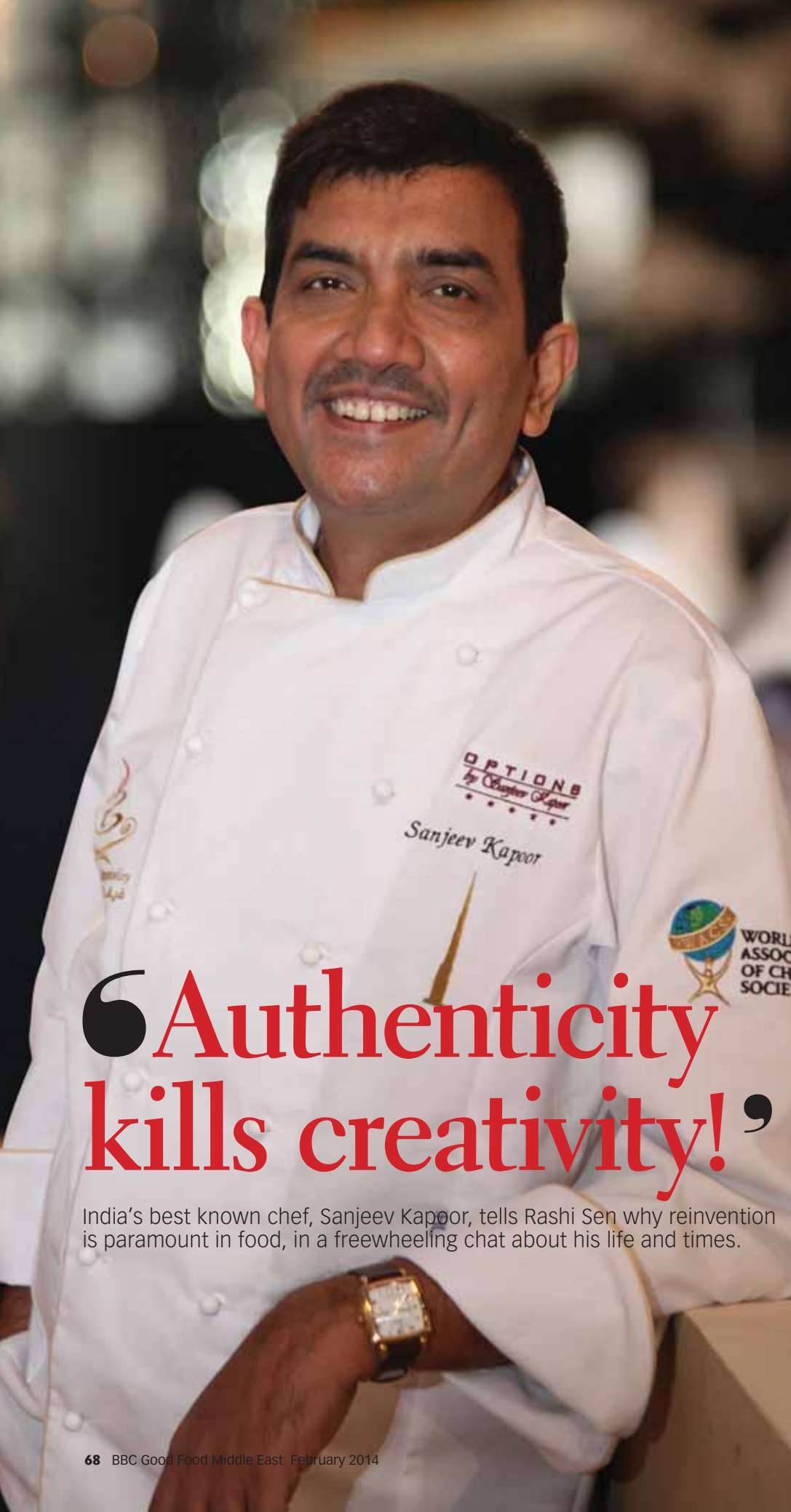
Full-of-flavour Brazil nuts are highly nutritious. They are a source of an essential mineral – selenium, which, among other things, is needed for an enzyme called glutathione peroxidase, one of the body’s own built-in antioxidants. It also helps the immune system and thyroid to work more effectively – and just one Brazil nut provides your daily requirements. They are also high in healthy fatty acids – about a third polyunsaturated (mainly omega-6), and another third monounsaturated.

**Add to your diet** Enjoy Brazils as a snack, in salads, or chopped up in crumble toppings. They make a great substitute for pine nuts in pesto – blitz with herbs, garlic, olive oil, Parmesan and lemon juice and toss through pasta – and you can also use them instead of almonds in bakes.

**POMEGRANATES****Why are they good for me?**

With a very high antioxidant content that includes polyphenols, tannins and anthocyanins – which are higher than green tea or red wine – pomegranates have powerful abilities. The fruit appears to protect against high blood pressure, plaque deposits, hardening in the arteries and some cancers, such as prostate. Pomegranate seeds are rich in fibre and low in calories – it has 83 calories and 4g of dietary fibre per 100g serving – and helps keep you full for longer, which also makes it a great food to aid weight loss.

**Add to your diet** Try sprinkling pomegranate seeds on your yogurt or muesli for a healthy breakfast. You can also use it in salads, in couscous, as a dessert topping or garnish in Middle Eastern dishes. [EF](#)



# “Authenticity kills creativity!”

India's best known chef, Sanjeev Kapoor, tells Rashi Sen why reinvention is paramount in food, in a freewheeling chat about his life and times.

I know this evening will be an interesting one when the face of MasterChef India's third season looks me squarely in the eye and says that cooking is not about competition. It is not about following recipes alone, nor is it about letting your ego run loose. Sanjeev Kapoor, celebrity chef and entrepreneur, was born in Ambala in the north-western Indian state of Haryana, and raised in Delhi, where he graduated from the Institute of Hotel Management Catering & Nutrition, Pusa, in 1984. Always inspired to do something different, he chose to study cookery at a time when it was not looked upon as a respectable profession in India – certainly not for a man. At about 26, he became the executive chef of the 400-room Mumbai Centaur Hotel and was soon offered the role of a host for the first-of-its-kind cookery show in India, Khana Khazana, making him a household name and face in a country of millions. There has been no looking back since.

Hundreds of cookbooks and numerous awards later, Kapoor now has a franchise that runs a mammoth website, which gets more than 25 million hits a month and a 24-hour food channel, which is aired in 120 countries and counting. He is also considered one of the top chefs in the world alongside Heston Blumenthal, Gordon Ramsay, Jamie Oliver and Wolfgang Puck, according to a CNN report, and has a loyal fan following around the world.

## Recipe for success

Yet he is humbler and more approachable than any chef I've interviewed. "You learn very early on that humility is an important requirement for success. You cannot get very far in the kitchen if you don't have respect for someone else's cooking." That, coupled with a positive outlook and hard work, complete the recipe for success, says the chef. "You have to tell your mind that things are not difficult and that you'll be able to succeed. If you start believing in something, it starts happening. I am a firm believer in the power of positive thinking.

"Let me share a small incident that happened on my first day of work at a hotel," says Kapoor. "There were 20 of us, all management trainees, and, as part of the induction, we were taken to different departments at the Centaur Hotel. When we entered the executive chef's room, I asked, 'Sir, how old are you?' He said, 'I am 40. Why do you ask?' I said, 'I just want to know how long it takes to become an executive chef.' He said, 'I started when I was 20 and it has taken me 20 years to get here. I am the youngest executive chef this company has. Now that you know, what are you going to do?' I said, 'I will do it in ten [years]. How? Most people



work eight hours, I'll work 16.' Everybody laughed at me then, but I actually did it in 8 years!"

Today Kapoor heads the kitchens of a chain of Indian and Asian-inspired restaurants – Khazana, The Yellow Chilli, Pin Yin Cafe, Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor and Sura Vie Lounge – which have branches in India and around the world. With this month's launch of the second Options in Dubai this year, Kapoor now has four restaurants in the emirate and all four seem to be doing quite well. Options by Sanjeev Kapoor, seven years old, marked the master chef's first foray into the Middle East. It is an exclusive brand available only in Dubai and, true to its name, serves up a dizzying variety of Indian dishes. "Guests were driving all the way from Abu Dhabi to eat at my establishments but I always thought that Dubai was the place to be and didn't even consider visiting Abu Dhabi. Couple of years ago, when I got a chance to breeze through Abu Dhabi for some events, I felt that the city would grow into this vibrant food hub very soon. So, now we have this fantastic location on the capital's corniche."

The restaurant in Abu Dhabi, Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor, is much bigger than its namesake in Dubai. "The two Signatures will be the same in philosophy but serve different things on the menu. We'll go for a sort of modern rustic look in the restaurant. We will work with hand-cut stones, wood and metal to achieve this look," he says. When I question his obvious interest and knowledge about the interiors, he reveals, "Not many people know that if I was not a chef I would have been an architect".

### Redefining Indian cuisine

The menu at Signature by Sanjeev Kapoor will be 'progressive Indian' – while it will be Indian, it will not be old-world, explains Kapoor. "What do I mean by that?" He himself asks as a response to the confusion evident on my face. "The Indian food of today is based on the goodness of what was. Some of the rich heritage that Indian food is bequeathed with may not be relevant today. The way we used to cook 75 years ago was very different from what it is today and that's mainly because some of the procedures involved have become irrelevant. For instance, in India, refrigeration dates back some 75 years. Before that, you had to overcook food and add a lot of oil and spices, because you were preserving it for at least a day. Today we don't need to do this. So we can cut down on these things.

"We have to move with times, our style has to change, but this does not mean we lose a sense of our traditions and heritage," he continues. "From where we mix and use our blends of spices to the

different styles of cooking vegetables and curries – using multiple ingredients for one single dish, for instance – this is all very intrinsic and unique to Indian food."

Indian food, with so many regional variations, is certainly very difficult to define. I ask how he tackles that. "Do you mean Indian food in restaurants or Indian food at home?" comes the reply. "Normally, restaurant-style food in India is quite different from what is cooked at home. You may live a full life and may never bake naan bread at home, yet you go out to eat and order it and it's Indian.

"In my kitchens, the expectation is that of restaurant-style food, so the perception of restaurant style is what we have to manage and then create something that gives customers the comfort of familiarity, while giving them something new."

What about defining 'authentic' Indian food? "There is nothing called authentic, food is ever changing, otherwise it would be very boring," says Kapoor passionately. "What was authentic yesterday,

**6 The way we used to cook 75 years ago was very different from what it is today, and that's because some of the procedures involved have become irrelevant. 9**

what was authentic 50 years ago, what was authentic 400 years ago, is not the same, it has been changing. Whatever I do is authentic Sanjeev Kapoor. If I try to cook something that was authentic 20 years ago, it will not be authentic for me, that is someone else's authentic. I will only be copying.

"Authenticity may help standardisation, authenticity may help grow a cult of a certain kind of food but authenticity kills creativity. Because the moment people try to be too authentic, they are compromising on creativity.

As it turns out, a cuisine that is so difficult to define is equally challenging to cook. "Indian food is very bold," says Kapoor. "To work with an ingredient in isolation is easy because the results are predictable. If you smell thyme and put it in your food, you know what it will taste like, but when you put thyme and mint and coriander, along with cardamom and cloves, and then some ginger and garlic, and still ensure that everything lends a balanced taste – that's difficult and that's where Indian food stands out."

So how important are presentation and plating? "Presentation is important but not more than taste," says Kapoor. "What's the point of designing fantastic clothes that no one can wear? In the same vein, food should be designed so people enjoy eating it – food is not a visual expression alone on the plate. It is the palate that has to say 'wow'."

And when does Kapoor's palate go wow? "I enjoy eating home-cooked food, and not just from my home, anybody's home. So now that I am in Dubai, I would like to try homemade Emirati meals. Other than that, naturally, things which you have grown up with tend to be special. So the way my mum cooks Punjabi curry, sarson ka saag or rajma, no matter what state of mind I am in, I can eat them. It is not just the taste but also the emotional connection that makes mum's food so special. A mother's burnt toast can taste better than the perfectly toasted bread."

It is obvious that Kapoor is a family man, and a nice guy to be around. "I have a very easy-going style in the kitchen; one that does not put pressure on anyone." It appears that the only pressure he gives in to are from his wife and two daughters, Rachita and Kriti, who he admits are the light of his life. "When it comes to holidays, the kids are the boss. They decide where they want to go and we tag along," smiles the chef. "Spain has come to

become one of my favourite holiday destinations."

Of course, the holidays are as much about family as they are about food. "As soon as a destination is decided, we work on where to eat and what to eat. Everyone in the family is a total foodie! A few years ago, even when we thought that my daughter could not do justice to a €200 meal, she would be enthusiastic to try the food, and I love that."

Being someone who travels around the world trying out all kinds of cuisines, Kapoor expresses a keen interest in the growing green trend that upholds local sourcing of food. "A lot of good places are now focusing on the seasonality of food as well. Importance is given to regional cuisine, making food location-specific and, therefore, more special. This is a sustainable idea with very little carbon footprint and the food is also fresh."

His next venture is opening up his own culinary school in India – one where he can inspire young minds to let their imaginations loose and be creative. Because he believes it's not enough to just cook good food. "I feel I have a greater obligation – to lead the way in a direction where people can follow. For instance, if we do molecular gastronomy in the restaurant, and it turns out to be something that people cannot grasp, then it's not worth our while. I want to leave a legacy, give direction and lead the way in which followers can be satisfied and believe that they are also contributing." >>

## SIGNATURE RECIPES



### Bhel ke kebab

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS

200g puffed rice (bhel)

360ml yoghurt

Salt

2-3 green chillis, finely chopped

3 tbsp coriander leaves, finely chopped

Oil, to shallow-fry kebabs

**FOR THE STUFFING**

1 tsp oil

1 tsp cumin seeds

150g green peas, boiled

Salt, to taste

1-2 green chillis, finely chopped

1 tbsp raw mango powder

**1** Soak the puffed rice in yoghurt for 30 mins. Add salt, chopped green chillis and coriander leaves. Mix well to form a very thin dough.

**2** Heat 1 tsp oil in a pan and then add cumin seeds. Add boiled peas, salt, green chillis and mango powder. Mix well and crush the peas as they cook.

**3** Take a handful of the dough and make a small depression in the centre. Fill with 1 tsp of the green peas mixture. Roll and shape into kebabs.

**4** Shallow-fry the kebabs in a non-stick pan and serve with a chutney of your choice.

### Poached salmon with sun blushed red chillies and tamarind pesto

SERVES 4 ● PREP 30 MINS ● COOK 30 MINS

600g white salmon fillet

3 tsp turmeric powder

3 tsp red chilli powder

3 tsp red chilli flakes

2 tsp coriander seeds

2 tsp cumin seeds

Salt, to taste

130ml vinegar

3 tbsp jaggery

1 garlic pod

100g tamarind paste

2 bunches fresh coriander

3 lemons

2 oranges

4 tbsp olive oil

6 tsp pomegranate seeds

1 tsp dry mango powder

2 slices white bread

12 long fresh red chillies

120ml oil


**1** Cut the fish fillets into small pieces and coat with a spice mix of turmeric powder, red chilli powder, red chilli flakes, coriander seeds, cumin seeds and salt.

**2** Make a poaching liquid with the vinegar and jaggery. Poach the fish in this for 15-20 mins.

**3** Blanch the garlic in boiling water. Blend the blanched garlic, tamarind paste, salt, fresh coriander, lemon and orange juice and olive oil to make the tamarind pesto.

**4** Make a thick chutney by blending the pomegranate seeds, dry mango powder and bread together.

**5** Slice and deseed the chillies, and fill with the chutney. Season and drizzle olive oil on top. Steam the chillis in the oven until tender.

**6** Layer chillis on top of the salmon on a plate and serve with the tamarind pesto. 





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# GoodFood

MIDDLE EAST



## MY KITCHEN

The centrepiece of the kitchen is a large island featuring a prep area with hot water tap, an ice sink, bar stools and a wine rack

# Si King

Val Wotton visits Si King, one half of the BBC's *Hairy Bikers*, and gets a tour of his fabulous kitchen. Photographs GEOFF WILKINSON

As one half of the phenomenally successful *Hairy Bikers*, Si is often away filming or on tour – cooking, baking and biking across Britain, Europe and beyond. But his heart is at home with his wife, Jane, and their three sons, Alex, James and Dylan.

Two years ago, the family moved to a Victorian villa just outside Newcastle, UK, and they have recently finished rebuilding the back of the house, replacing a hotchpotch of botched extensions with a stunning kitchen area.

Si and fellow biker Dave Myers are busy with their new BBC Two series, *Hairy Bikers' Everyday Gourmet* which is airing in the UK.

### Who designed your kitchen?

We went to Kiso Kitchens, who were brilliant. My brother did all the building work and we tried to source as much as possible from local suppliers – things like the ceramic floor tiles.

Jane had a clear idea of the look she wanted – a very clean, simple style, an eclectic mix between modern and classic. She dealt with the aesthetics; I was more into the practicalities, like the cooker.

### So, what did you choose?

A Wolf range cooker, because it's a cross between a domestic and a commercial model, and gives me lots of different ways to cook. The two ovens are very accurate – great for recipe-testing. The hob has four big burners, a griddle and a French top, my favourite bit. It's a solid iron plate over a big central burner, so you can move pans around on it, to boil in the middle or keep warm at the edge.

Good extraction was also important for me and we put in a pretty heavy-duty industrial thing – don't stand under it wearing a wig!

### What about other appliances?

We've got a microwave, a steam oven that we use a lot – it's so good for rice, bread, veg, everything – and a warming drawer. They're all by Miele, which is expensive, but we'd rather pay more and have things last than have to replace them every few years.

We didn't want any technology for the sake of it; it all has to work, like the boiling-water tap – that's one of my favourite things – and the industrial ice maker in the utility room.

The sociable open-plan room includes dining and sitting areas



### Your other favourites?

The walk-in pantry, definitely. We had one when I was little and I absolutely loved it. It's fantastic for cheese, salamis, jars of pickle and jam; I love walking into it.

My other favourite thing is the outdoor area, with a barbecue and a pizza oven. It harks back to the original *Hairies*, when we were cooking in ditches – but a bit posher! It's a covered area because we eat outside whatever the weather. And we've got a load of great taps. And four sinks – I've only ever had one before! At 45, I've become a tap fan! And I love having the wine rack handy.





Outdoor cooking is easy as the pizza oven and a barbecue are sheltered under cover



The fridge and freezer stand either side of a microwave, steam oven and warming drawer



For parties, Si fills the Kohler IceRock sink with ice, then lays out oysters and seafood



The walk-in pantry has marble shelves which help to keep foods cool



A splashback by glass artist Deborah Wilkinson complements the sturdy, dual-fuel Wolf range cooker



A wood-topped prep area at one end of the island includes a small sink with both boiling water and chilled filtered water on tap

## SI'S PLANNING TIPS

- Merge the kitchen and dining or sitting room to make one large, light, sociable space.
- Buy items from local suppliers where possible.
- Avoid dust-catching radiators and save space with underfloor heating – don't run it under units or in a pantry.


## Anything you would change?

I'm not overly fond of dark granite worktops and thought they were going to be a mistake, but Jane said, 'Trust me, they'll work' – and they do.

But I am a big fan of natural light and we do wish we'd put another skylight over the kitchen. The dining and sitting areas are great though, very light with glass doors opening onto the garden. Kiso did a brilliant lighting plan – everything is on dimmers, so you can change the atmosphere, or spotlight different areas.

## So, to sum up?

We love the kitchen, it's such a sociable area. When we're all at home, we spend most of our time eating. We all cook, even our youngest, Dylan; but cooking here you're part of all that's going on.

Music is important to us, too, so we have a fantastic wireless sound system, all controlled from an iPad. We're a very sociable family – we love food, music and company, and the kitchen really fulfils the rhythm of our household. 

## GET THE LOOK



A thick and durable wooden chopping board, like this Accacia Cutting board from The One (Dhs139) is a kitchen essential.



If your kitchen is as sociable as Si's then this simple Lack wooden side table will be useful in the sitting area. Dhs39 at Ikea.

Add your favourite flowers to this Moma vase, to brighten up the dining area. Dhs22 at Bloomingdale's Home.



The InSinkErator HC 3300C Chrome finish tap provides hot and cold water and includes a water tank. Dhs3,699 at Al Futtaim Electronics and Ace.



Food, bowls and plates can be warmed up in this drawer which has a glass control panel with sensor switches, 12 place settings and a stainless steel handle. From Dhs5,500 at Miele.

# Foodie February in the capital

The sixth edition of Gourmet Abu Dhabi, taking place through this month, will see a galaxy of culinary stars descending on the city. We take a look at some of the most exciting names to watch out for.

Gourmet Abu Dhabi is back from February 4-19 2014, with an array of themed dinners, culinary demonstrations, celebrity chefs, luncheons, brunches and gala dinners. Here's a sneak peek at this year's event.



## George Calombaris

This renowned culinary star, a regular visitor to the UAE, is a judge on MasterChef Australia and owns several restaurants in Melbourne and Greece, including his flagship outlet The Press Club.

**Catch him at:** *The Celebrity Dinner in the Crystal Ballroom of Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche, which will take place on February 16. Dhs950 per person. We will be attending this event, so do come by and say hello!*

## Amina El Shafei

The 29-year old Saudi Arabian-born chef of Egyptian-Korean heritage, is well known for her participation in last season's Masterchef Australia. Amina has been working closely with the only female Emirati chef in the UAE, Khulood Atiq, to create food with a Middle Eastern flair for the event.

**Catch her at:** *The Culinary Creation Stage at The Westin Abu Dhabi Golf Resort and Spa on February 7 and 8. Dhs200 for one day and Dhs350 for two days.*



## Christopher Kostow

This three-Michelin starred chef who won the James Beard Foundation 'Best Chef' award – A US award which celebrates culinary arts leaders – will be participating at this year's event. The famed chef has appeared on Food Network's Iron Chef America and the Cooking Channel.

**Catch him at:** *The Forge, the signature steakhouse restaurant at The Ritz-Carlton Abu Dhabi, Grand Canal, from February 5-8.*

## Edward Kwon

This South Korean celebrity chef is on a mission to put Korean cuisine on the map. Edward previously worked as the hotel Head chef at Burj Al Arab, is a cookbook author, TV and radio personality, and founder of two restaurants in South Korea – The Mixed One and Lab XXIV.

**Catch him at:** *Teatro, Park Rotana Abu Dhabi, where he will host a four day promotion.*



## Henrik Yde-Andersen

The Masterchef Denmark judge, who is also the founder of six restaurants and head of the kitchen at Sra Bua by Kim Kin restaurant in Bangkok, gained international fame through his Michelin-star Thai outlet, Kiin Kiin (Come and Eat), in Copenhagen.

**Catch him at:** *Pachaylen, the Thai restaurant at Eastern Mangroves Hotel and Spa by Anantara, where he will be holding a selection of culinary promotions.*







### Fabio Pissani

The Italian chef who is at the helm of the two-Michelin star Il Luogo di Aimo e Nadio – a 50-year old Milanese restaurant – will be running a selection of promotions and culinary creation workshops.

**Catch him at:** Bocca, Hilton Abu Dhabi, on February 18, to meet him and indulge in a chateaux dinner. Dhs950 per person.

### Marco Sacco

Returning back to this year's event is the acclaimed master chef who is well-known for his authentic Italian dishes with a modern touch. Marco will be hosting a selection of culinary promotions at the Hyatt Capital Gate Abu Dhabi – he is particularly enthusiastic about this venue as it recently received the title for the 'World's furthest leaning man-made tower' in the Guinness Book of Records.

**Catch him at:** 18 degrees, Hyatt Capital Gate Abu Dhabi from February 5-8.



### Christopher Muller

This masterchef is more commonly known as the protégé of French chef Paul Bocuse, but he has made quite the name for himself thanks to his role! Christopher, who heads the three-Michelin star L'Auberge du Pont de Collonges restaurant in Lyon, will be hosting a chateaux dinner.

**Catch him at:** Sofitel Abu Dhabi Corniche on February 11, Dhs1,100 per head.

### Ho Chee Boon

The two-Michelin starred chef based in Hakkasan New York first joined the restaurant at its London outpost in 2002, and was instrumental in the development of the brand worldwide. The chef earned the New York restaurant a Michelin star just seven months after it opened.

**Catch him at:** Hakkasan, Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, where he will be hosting a Château Dinner with Miguel Torres S.A on February 9. Dhs950 per person. 



# save the dates

## Here are some of the other events worth attending:

### OPENING GALA

**February 4**

The extravagant opening ceremony will take place at the outdoor venue Falcon Lawn at Fairmont Bab Al Bahr, and will gather together award-winning masterchefs, local chefs and special guests at the red carpet event. Dhs480 per person, call 02-6543333.



### S.PELLEGRINO AND ACQUA PANNA OPERA DINNER

**February 8**

Music and food come together for this spectacular dinner at

Mezzaluna, Emirates Palace Abu Dhabi, where three-Michelin star chef Massimo Bottura will stun guests with his specialties. American soprano Christina Belbelian, German opera singer Maria Gluck and British tenor Bradley Minchi will provide the entertainment at this lavish evening.

Dhs1,500 per person, call 02-6907999.

### BREAD BAKING WORKSHOP AND BREAKFAST

**February 8**

Master bread baker chef Rainer Scharold will share traditional, generations-old bread making techniques at Café D'Alsace, Yas Marina. You can pick up tips and tricks from the chef at the culinary demonstration, and enjoy an authentic Alsatian breakfast as well.

Dhs200 per person, call 02-5507896.



### MEAT-FEST DINNER

**February 15-18**

Masterchef Bart De Pooter from two Michelin star restaurant Pastore, in Belgium, will be serving two exclusive set menus (five- and seven-courses)

focused on meat at 55th & 5th, St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort.

From Dhs550 per person, call 02-4988008.

### NEED TO KNOW

Visit [gourmetabudhabi.ae](http://gourmetabudhabi.ae) to buy tickets, view event listings and find out more.



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## SHANGHAI SHANGRI-LA

The latest to open in the mix of luxury hotels in this Chinese super-city is the new Jing An Shangri-La hotel. Housed in a skyline-dominating skyscraper, the luxe hotel not only features stunning views from its rooms and suites and an impressive art collection, but four different restaurants offering diverse cuisines. Whether it's South Eastern and Cantonese Chinese at Summer Palace, New York-style steak at The 1515 West, or modern Japanese-inspired cuisine at Café Liang, this is the address to check in to on your next trip to Shanghai! Find out more on [www.shangri-la.com/jingan](http://www.shangri-la.com/jingan).



Since Valentine's day conveniently falls on a Friday this year, the Hotel Hermitage is your ultimate luxury Valentine weekend destination, with its spectacular setting overlooking the Mediterranean, and opulent décor. Champagne and roses will greet you in the hotel, followed by a candlelight dinner at Le Salle Belle Epoque with a special Valentines Day menu featuring glamorous delicacies like Dublin Bay Prawn and scallops duo in silvery green clothes, 'passion' nage'. The gastronomic delights continue into the next day, with a tête-à-tête breakfast for two, and Michelin starred restaurant Le Vistamar also creating a special menu for the occasion. Room rates start from Dhs1,475, visit [resort@sbm.mc](mailto:resort@sbm.mc).

Text: SUDESHNA GHOSH | Photographs: SUPPLIED



## TASTE OF THE world

All the foodie news from around the globe.

### A recipe for romance

Few destinations ooze romance as much as the Maldives, and when you can combine it with culinary extravagance, then it's a win win for any foodie looking for a Valentine getaway. Head to the award-winning Baros Maldives resort for their Gourmet Indulgence package where you can enjoy bubbly and canapés on arrival, a romantic dinner exclusively crafted by the resort chefs on a sandbank or the private Piano Deck in the middle of the lagoon, a one-to-one cooking demonstration and wine tasting, alongside the de rigueur activities you'd expect from an island holiday – including watersports and of course, the very important task of relaxation. From US\$605 (Dhs2,220) per night, visit [baros.com](http://baros.com).

### Coastal flavours

Think Indian cuisine is chicken tikka masala and little else? Think again! At the recently reopened Konkan Café at Vivanta by Taj President Mumbai, you can introduce your tastebuds to a variety of flavours from along the western coast of India, from Goa to Kerala and everywhere in between. The new menu features exotic delicacies like Ramasseri Idli from Palakkad (Steamed rice flour cakes), Malabari Chicken Masala, and Curdee Mango (Prawn with mango) in a cosy, home-style setting inspired by the region. There's even a signature Konkan wine label and traditional coffees on offer. It's tempting enough to get on a plane for! [vivantabytaj.com/President-Mumbai](http://vivantabytaj.com/President-Mumbai).



# 34

The number of destinations in Europe that newly launched airline Etihad Regional, a partnership between Etihad Airways and Switzerland-based Darwin Airline, will fly to, by mid-2014.



# THE OTHER JAPAN

The cultural and heritage capital Kyoto, poles apart from better known metropolis Tokyo, hides not only its own cuisine but a fascinating look into this unique country's past, says Georgina Wilson-Powell.

The Kodaji temple has history oozing from every inch

Photographs by WRITER and SUPPLIED



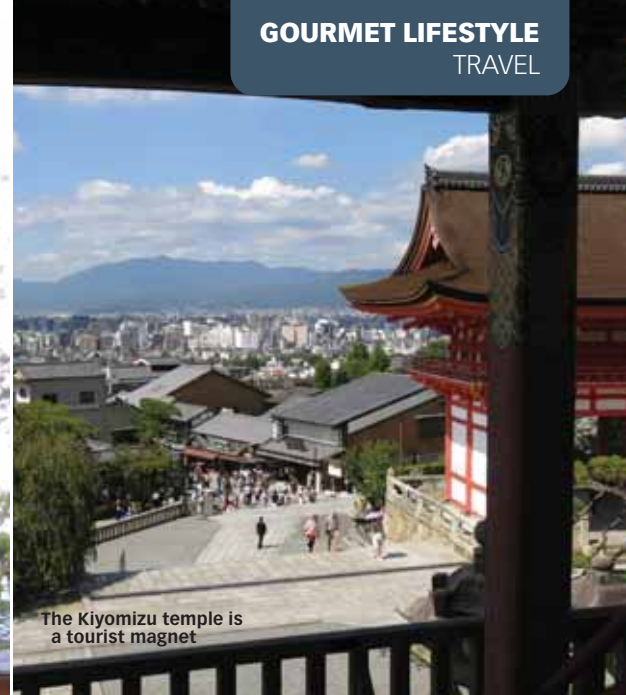


Ryokans are traditional Japanese B&Bs

**H**eavily wooded mountains surround the plain on which Kyoto sits on three sides. From the city's tallest hotel, above the modern train station, the city unfolds below like a map, it is rigorously grid-like and curiously lacking in tall buildings. The only tall structure for miles around, the Kyoto Tower, was apparently built in reaction to Tokyo hosting the Olympics in 1940 and is locally hated. As a city, Kyoto then feels gloriously gentle and old-fashioned. Residents ride around on bikes, which are seemingly never locked but jauntily left on the pavement on their stands without fear of being stolen. Small dark-wooden houses line each and every street and alleyway. These two story affairs seem rustic and monotonous to begin with, but after a day or two, each takes on a charm of its own, lit by the ubiquitous paper lanterns that act as menus for the thousands of local restaurants offering soba, tofu and kaiseki – the traditional Kyoto way of serving food in small, carefully balanced and beautifully prepared portions.

Minokechi ([Japanese-kyoto-cuisine.com](http://Japanese-kyoto-cuisine.com)) is one of the oldest kaiseki restaurants in Kyoto. It was founded in 1716 and remains traditional in its understated interior of sliding walls and simple décor. Sitting across from the super modern Kyoto train station with its two hour bullet trains to Tokyo, the restaurant sums up Kyoto – super-traditional on the one hand, but functional and modern on the other. All kaiseki meals have a balance of fish, tofu, vegetables and salads, miso soup and rice, artfully arranged usually in handmade bowls (it even has halal meals all ready to go as well). Kyoto pottery is famous in its own right and there are many potteries in the city to purchase the gorgeously elegant bowls, chopstick rests and soy sauce dishes.

Most of these potteries can be found around the run up to the most popular temple, the Kiyomizu-Dera complex, which sits at the top of a pedestrianised hill lined with souvenir shops. Every day the street is filled with large school groups and



The Kiyomizu temple is a tourist magnet

young women in traditional kimonos as well as tourists working their way slowly up to the West Gate entrance. This temple has commanded the landscape here for 1,200 years, although most of the structures that exist today were built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A sprawling estate of gates, inner sanctuaries, shrines and statues, it is a stunning example of Kyoto's grandeur in times gone by and one of the most loved temples in Japan.

Also along this tourist stretch of Kyoto is the tofu-only restaurant Okabeya. Built on the site of a famous teahouse, this legendary restaurant serves up dishes with one main ingredient – tofu. While in other places a tofu-focused lunch might not be first on your list, here it is cooked with reverence and plenty of flavour. A huge bowl of tofu and miso soup is left on the table, the soy blocks cut like soft butter under chopsticks, while the waitresses bring rich sesame flavoured versions of soy skin, a delicacy known as yuba (it's much more delicious than it sounds).

### Tasty temple trails

While you can't move in Kyoto for tripping over a temple or two, you'll never find one exactly the same. The Kodaiji temple is another fascinating example across on the western side of the city. It was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the wife of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a warrior and politician, who had a huge impact on Japanese life. He solidified the class system, banned slavery and created a legacy of respect for the elegant tea ceremony that now sits at the heart of so many social and cultural occasions in Japan. So beloved was making time for tea, that Hideyoshi had a mobile tea ceremony room made, covered in gold leaf, and took it with him everywhere he went. This remarkable contraption can be seen at the temple along with other remnants from his time.



At the Tawaraya Yoshitomi sweet factory ([japanartsandcrafts.com](http://japanartsandcrafts.com)), the tea ceremony is still practiced reverently, overseen by a tea master. Visitors can attend a ceremony and be enthralled by the complex ritual that goes into making a bowl of green tea. With rules covering the entire process, from preparing the room, to which way the implements face, through to first gasp and last slurp, it's a fascinating insight into Japanese culture.

As Japan's intellectual and cultural centre for over 1,000 years, Kyoto's history is intertwined with the fate of the samurai, which culture both began and ended in the city. The head of the samurai, called a Shogun, was based in Kyoto at Nijo Castle, which was built in 1603. It was also here in 1867 that the fifteenth and last Shogun, Yoshinobu, succeeded his power back to the Emperor, where it has remained ever since. The open plan, one level 'castle' is open to the public and visitors can see the original screen-printed murals that are beautiful examples of the famed Edo period. Whilst samurai and geishas' clothes were decadent and rich, the castle itself is sparsely decorated, a commitment to minimalism that continues in Japanese design today.

### Immersive experiences

A testament to both ancient Japanese culture and to minimalist design, is a ryokan. Ryokans (Japanese inns) sprung up in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as family homes with guestrooms, much like a Japanese version of a western B&B. They are now difficult to find in larger cities, replaced by hotels, but in Kyoto, a few remain. The most famous is Ryokan Yoshidasanso ([yoshidasanso.com](http://yoshidasanso.com)), which was built in the 1930s for the Emperor's uncle. Still alive, the uncle is now in a nearby home, and the beautiful building, complete with sliding doors, paper screen walls and futons for sleeping on, is open to a small number of visitors. Tomoko Nakamura runs the ryokan with her family and has opened a small artisanal café in the old garage next door. An overnight stay with Tomoko offers a very special insight into traditional Japanese culture and a kaiseki meal in the evening – for which guests are encouraged to dress for

dinner in kimonos the ryokan can lend you – serves up some cuts of fish, tofu and various sorbets that you will never forget! The garden is perfect for meditation in the morning, and if you're feeling brave, you can also try the hot communal bath that sits within the shared bathrooms.

While visitors could spend weeks discovering Japan's traditions amongst the narrow streets, colourful temples and zen gardens, time should be taken to explore the Pontocho District, one of the oldest areas of Kyoto. The riverside district is a den of narrow streets, strings of lanterns and is home to several hundred geisha. Misoguijawa ([misogui.jp](http://misogui.jp)) is one of the standout restaurants in this district. Another converted teahouse with a beautiful view over the river, the restaurant offers Chef Teruo Inoue's French-Japanese creations. A nine-course tasting menu will present you with Mediterranean flavours reimagined for a nation of sushi and sashimi lovers. It is a total treat for foodies and a fabulous introduction to anyone who's not quite sure about diving completely into a world of Japanese food.

Altogether, a trip to Kyoto, which is a world away from heady, 24-hour Tokyo, is a fantastic way to understand there's more to Japan than karaoke and sushi (although, should you wish to partake in the former, there are plenty of music venues, just waiting for you to take to the stage). 🍱

## TRAVEL DIARY

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Osaka via Singapore on Singapore Airlines (from Dhs 3,525; [singaporeairlines.com](http://singaporeairlines.com)). From there Kyoto is a half an hour taxi ride away.

### STAYING THERE

Stay at Hotel Granvia, the city's leading hotel, that is well set up for foreign visitors (from Dhs990; [granviakyoto.com](http://granviakyoto.com)).



Experiment with exotic delicacies when in Japan



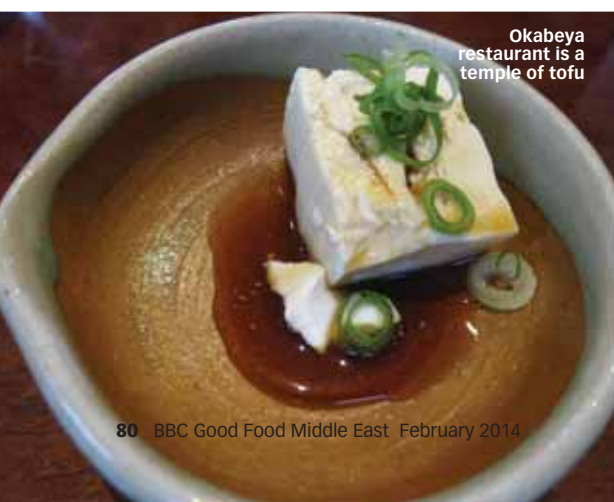
The street food is abundant and delicious



Sweets galore in street-side stalls



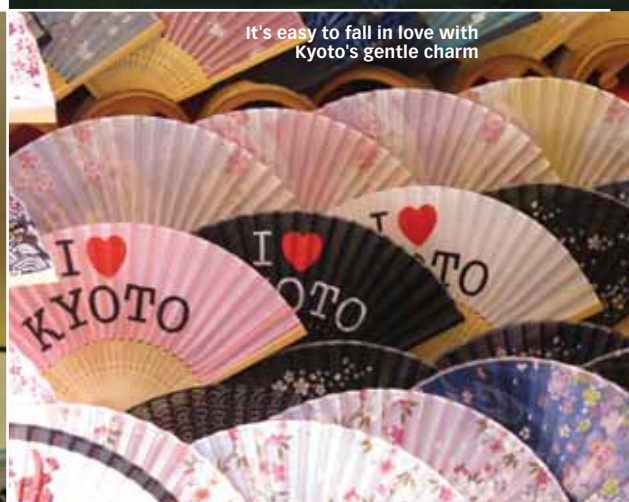
The Kodaji temple area is set in a scenic spot



Okabeya restaurant is a temple of tofu



In Kyoto, the Geisha culture is carefully preserved



It's easy to fall in love with Kyoto's gentle charm





private plunge pools. It is located in the northernmost atoll of the Maldives Haa Alif, and offers a variety of activities including diving, sunset cruises, traditional Maldivian fishing trips and dolphin cruises, as well as spa treatments.

A culinary destination in its own right, the resort is also home to new Maldivian restaurant Kakuni Village, which offers traditional Maldivian specialties such as green mango and papaya sala (Kandu Mussanma), a braised tuna in spicy coconut curry, and local coconut bread (Kiru roshi) – all served in barrel-shape, shallow wooden boxes – in a traditional alfresco setting featuring wooden tables crafted by local carpenters.

One lucky winner and their partner can enjoy a two-night stay, breakfast on both days, and a dinner at Kakuni Village as part of this prize.

Log on [bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://bbcgoodfoodme.com) to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

**What is the name of the Maldivian restaurant at Beach House Iruveli?**

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#### DHAFA BEACH HOTEL

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**5 lucky winners can get a Dhs1,000 voucher each, to dine at the newly-opened restaurant, Tortuga Mexican Kitchen and Bar, at Mina A'Salam, Madinat Jumeirah.**




Five lucky winners can take their friends along to the restaurant, and enjoy a meal worth Dhs1,000, savouring authentic delicacies from the menu such as Molcajete (melted cheese in a hot volcanic bowl) and churros (crunchy fried choux pastry).

Madinat Jumeirah is home to 40 restaurants, and the latest one to become part of this epicurean hub is Tortuga Mexican Kitchen and Bar. At the helm of this restaurant's kitchen is award-winning Mexican chef Carlos Hannon, who aims to make it a go-to place for anyone looking for an authentic Mexican meal. The relaxed, casual restaurant features a live tortilla cooking station, bar, and outdoor terrace which boasts views of the stunning Arabian Gulf.

Log on [bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://bbcgoodfoodme.com) to enter this competition and simply answer this question:

**What is the name of the chef at Tortuga Mexican Kitchen and Bar?**

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# Competitions

Fabulous prizes, from dining vouchers to event passes, up for grabs.

**DUBAI Food Carnivals**  
giveaways

## WIN! TICKETS TO THE DUBAI FOOD CARNIVAL, DUBAI FESTIVAL CITY, WORTH DHS120.

One lucky winner and a friend can join us at this foodie extravaganza – on February 21 and 22 – which is also the inaugural event for Dubai Food Festival! Get ready to sample a selection of dishes from local restaurants, meet celebrity chefs including John Torode, take part in competitions, and enjoy live entertainment.



## WIN! THE ENTERTAINER FINE DINING BOOK AND APP WORTH DHS395.

The two-for-one discount book is great value for anyone who loves to dine out. One lucky winner will get a chance to win the voucher book from The Entertainer – a partner of The Dubai Food Carnival – and save over Dhs173,000 on restaurants, when dining out throughout the year.

## WIN! CHEESE AND GRAPE NIGHT FOR TWO AT PLANTATION LOUNGE, SOFITEL DUBAI JUMEIRAH BEACH, WORTH DHS500.

One lucky winner and a friend can visit this colonial-style lounge, to indulge in the Platinum package which includes an assortment of French specialty cheeses, and free-flowing wine. The resident DJ provides all the entertainment you'll need.



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Four lucky winners can get their hands on a hamper of hand-decorated mugs worth Dhs240 each, from this renowned British brand. If you enjoy a cup of coffee or tea every day, you will love sipping it from these gorgeous mugs from now on. The mini hamper includes a set of two ½ pint mugs.



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One lucky winner gets to hone their baking skills and explore the art of making pastries at this hands-on cooking class. Learn how to make a selection of cakes, cookies, chocolates and pastries, and get expert tips from the chef as well.



## WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT ZAYTOUN, CROWNE PLAZA DUBAI FESTIVAL CITY, WORTH DHS500.

One winner and a dining partner can visit this all-day dining restaurant, which boasts spectacular views of the Dubai Creek to enjoy a selection of mouthwatering Mediterranean delights. The extensive menu includes everything from pizza, pasta and risotto, to Mykonos-style shrimps.



## WIN! DINNER FOR TWO AT CHANNELS RESTAURANT, MEDIA ROTANA DUBAI, WORTH DHS230.

One winner can take a friend to the Pacific Islands theme night on Saturdays at Channels restaurant, to experience Hawaiian cuisine at its best! Signature dishes such as baked mahi-mahi with pineapple salsa and paella are just some of the few delights you can indulge in here.



**To stand a chance to win these prizes, visit our competitions page on [www.bbcgoodfoodme.com](http://www.bbcgoodfoodme.com), or simply scan this QR code with your mobile to go directly to the website, and answer the simple questions.**

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Travel and cooking are two of **SANNE MOLLER** or **MITZIE MEE'S** (her online alter ego) fondest passions in life. The 33-year old South Korean-born founder of travel and food blog Mitzie Mee grew up in the Danish countryside – she was adopted by Danish parents – and always had a strong wanderlust. She fulfilled this by working as a tourist rep in Greece and Spain, a stewardess, and then a pilot for an airline in Denmark for two years. Sanne gave up the sky high life for sunny Dubai in 2012, and currently works on her website when she isn't busy with medicine studies, reading and listening to Jay-Z.

66 I love a bowl of edamame with lemon and salt. 99



**IN TEN MINUTES,  
I CAN COOK**

A tangy and spicy Thai beef salad.

## My Valentine's Day menu

This year I want to get my hands on a good piece of smoked Faroe salmon to serve with crème fraîche, red onion and blini for a starter. My husband loves when I make him something from his home country. The main will be a tenderloin steak with béarnaise and sweet potato mash, and for dessert we'll tuck into crème brûlée.

## Food luxury

Good salt! I prefer the Danish brand **Læsø Salt**, which is made from salty groundwater on a small Danish island. In Dubai I usually buy crystal flakes sea salt from the Swedish brand **Falksalt**.

# Meet the blogger

Helping you connect to the UAE'S foodie community, one blog post at a time.

### ★ About the blog

I began blogging in 2009 to document all my travel experiences – I had only one follower back then, my mom! But I revamped it and included a recipe section in 2012. **Mitziemee.com** is like an online diary, and the name is my alias – my friends cat's name was Mitzie and Mee sounded Asian – as I wanted to keep my personal and virtual life apart. Food is such an integral part of the overall travel experience, so I write about my travels and food so that readers can follow my trips closely. I enjoy cooking a lot, especially Thai food for its simplicity and tastiness. Readers can also find a selection of traditional Danish dishes on the blog – I'm working my way through my grandma's recipes.

### A city I'd love to live in...

Tokyo! Japanese cuisine is one of my favourites and I love the large variety in flavour, texture and the emphasis on the appearance of food.

### Culinary icons

My late maternal grandma. She was passionate about food and refused to compromise on ingredients – she always used the best. Her food was amazing and she only cooked with full fat cream and butter. Her old hand-written recipes are a great source of inspiration, especially when I'm cooking traditional Danish food.

### Over the years I've learnt...

Sharing food on the table is a great, social way of eating! When I took up an internship in Korea I hated the lunches as people would not let me have my food for myself, and dug into my soup, noodles and fish without hesitation. Today I have learnt to appreciate sharing plates of food, as you get the chance to try lots of different dishes within one meal.

### Weekday cooking

My husband and I love eating Thai soup and salads as they are a great reminder of our trips to Thailand, and super healthy and easy to make as well.

### I often crave...

**Skerpikjøtt** from the Faroe Islands. **Skerpikjøtt** is fermented, air-dried lamb meat. It smells horrible, but it tastes great. My husband is from the Faroe Islands, and when we are visiting his family, they always have a lamb leg or two prepared just for me.







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